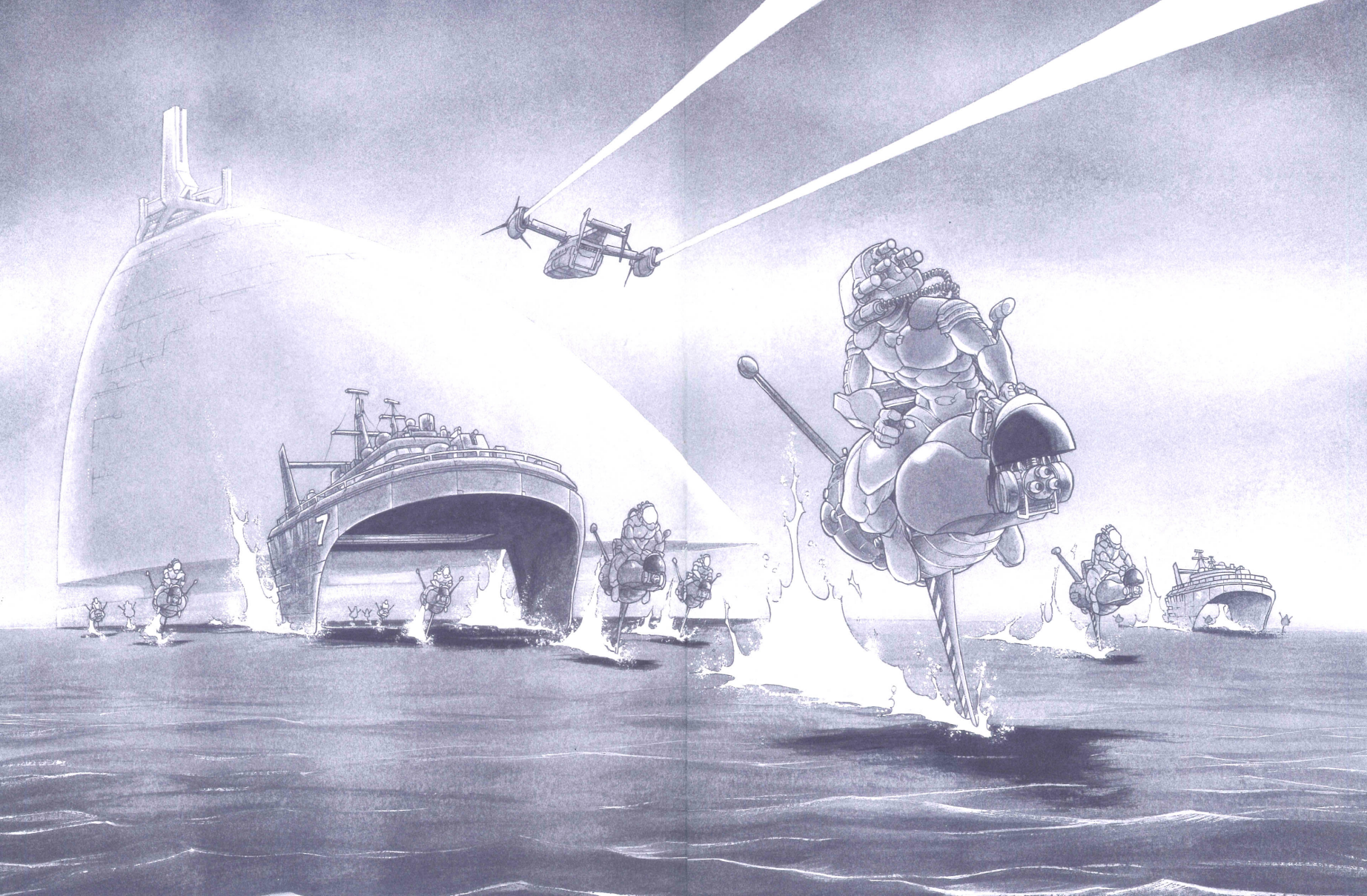
PECQUEUR · MALFIN · SCHELLE

Golden City

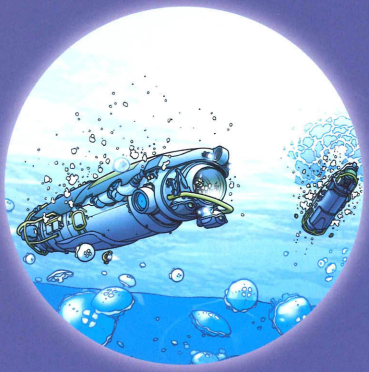
8. THE SURVIVORS OF THE ABYSS

DELCOURT



Golden City

8. THE SURVIVORS OF THE ABYSS



Story
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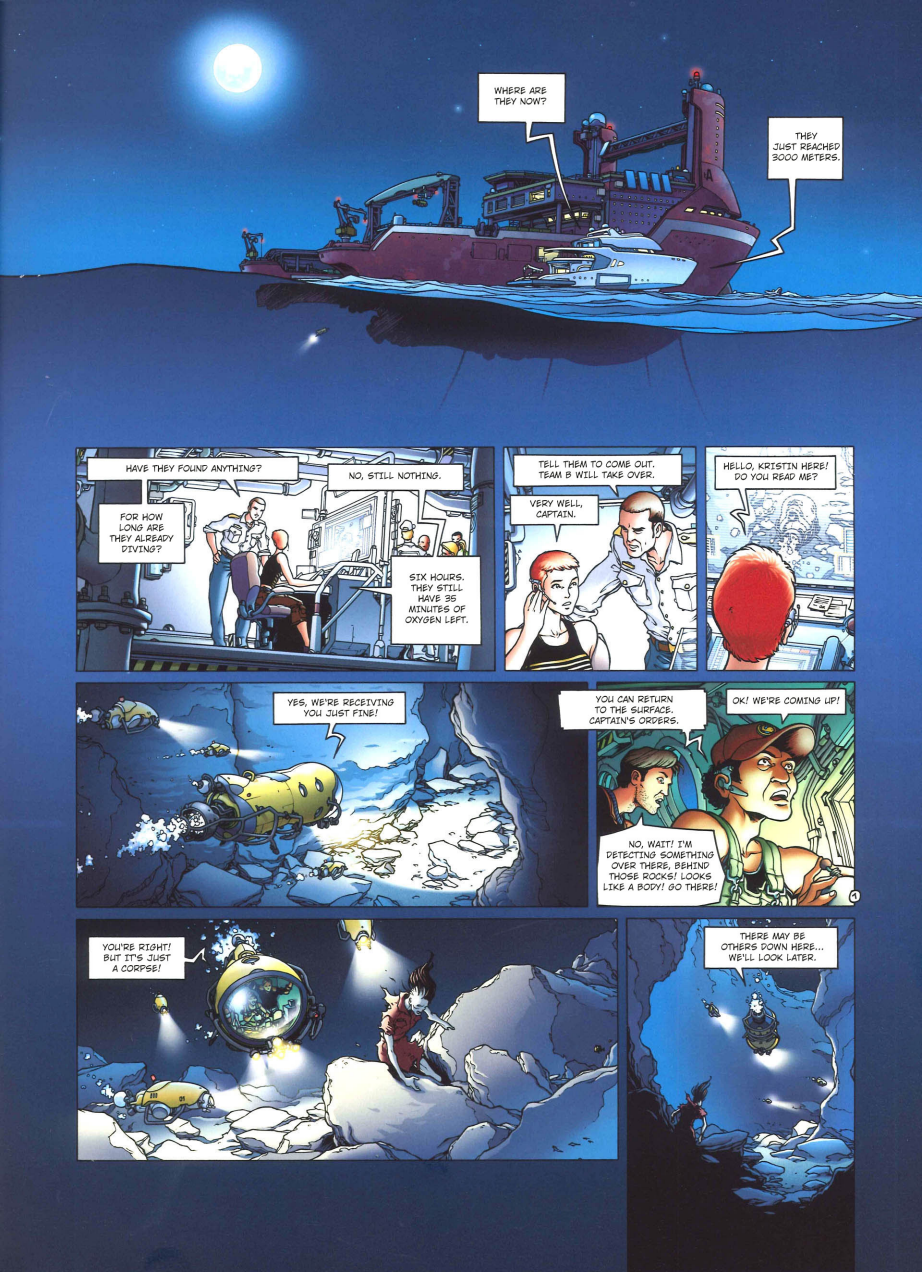
DELCOURT


WHERE ARE THEY NOW?
THEY JUST REACHED 3000 METERS.
HAVE THEY FOUND ANYTHING?
NO, STILL NOTHING.
FOR HOW LONG ARE THEY ALREADY DIVING?
SIX HOURS. THEY STILL HAVE 35 MINUTES OF OXYGEN LEFT.
TELL THEM TO COME OUT. TEAM B WILL TAKE OVER.
VERY WELL, CAPTAIN.
HELLO, KRISTIN HERE! DO YOU READ ME?
YES, WE'RE RECEIVING YOU JUST FINE!
YOU CAN RETURN TO THE SURFACE. CAPTAIN'S ORDERS.
OK! WE'RE COMING UP!
NO, WAIT! I'M DETECTING SOMETHING OVER THERE, BEHIND THOSE ROCKS! LOOKS LIKE A BODY! GO THERE!
4
YOU'RE RIGHT! BUT IT'S JUST A CORPSE!
THERE MAY BE OTHERS DOWN HERE... WE'LL LOOK LATER.

?!
GOLDEN CITY!

WE FINALLY FOUND IT!
KRISTIN, ARE YOU RECEIVING THE IMAGES FROM THE DRONE CAMERAS?
YES! WE'RE LOOKING AT THEM RIGHT NOW ON THE SCREEN AND WE'RE ALL IN SHOCK! VISIONS OF NIGHTMARE! IT'S TERRIFYING! DO YOU THINK THERE COULD BE ANY SURVIVORS?
IT'S HARD TO TELL. BUT GIVEN THE SCALE OF THE DAMAGE, IT SEEMS VERY UNLIKELY. I'M AFRAID NOBODY COULD HAVE ESCAPED FROM THIS TERRIBLE DISASTER!
ALL THAT'S LEFT TO DO IS DETERMINE THE CAUSE OF THIS TRAGEDY. AND WE NEED ALL DIVING TEAMS FOR THAT. RING THE ALARM CLOCK, KRISTIN. I WANT THEM ALL OPERATIONAL AT SUNRISE. IN OTHER WORDS, IN LESS THAN AN HOUR.
OK, CAPTAIN.
IT'S TIME FOR YOU TO RESURFACE, GUYS. OR YOU'LL RUN OUT OF OXYGEN.
OK, CAPTAIN. WE'RE COMING.

XXX
MIKHALKOV IS HERE, BOSS. HE'S ASKING FOR YOU. I TOLD HIM TO WAIT AT THE ENTRANCE, WE DON'T WANT HIM TO DISRUPT THE SHOW.
YOU DID WELL. I'M GOING.
4

EVERYTHING WENT AS PLANNED?
YES. I GAVE HIM A SLEEPING PILL TO KEEP QUIET.
GO DOWN TO THE BASEMENT BEFORE HE WAKES UP.
LOCK HIM IN THE BACK ROOM WITH THE OTHERS. THE DOOR CODE IS 2532.
OK!
HELLO, GIRLS! I BROUGHT YOU SOME COMPANY!
WHY ARE YOU KEEPING US LOCKED HERE? PLEASE, LET US OUT! WE HAVEN'T EATEN FOR SOME TIME, LOLI IS ON THE EDGE OF COLLAPSING!
I'LL TELL THEM TO BRING YOU SOMETHING TO EAT.
JIM!
?!
IS... IS HE DEAD?
NO, JUST SLEEPING!
DO YOU KNOW HIM? WHO IS HE?
MY LITTLE BROTHER.

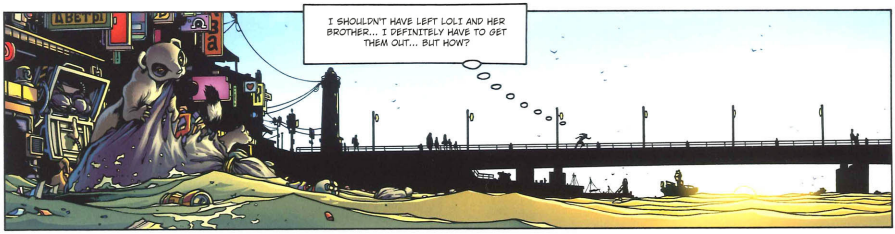
I DIDN'T KNOW YOU HAD A BROTHER. YOU NEVER TOLD ME ABOUT HIM.
I THOUGHT HE WAS KILLED ALONG WITH MY PARENTS.
YOUR PARENTS WERE KILLED? BY WHO?
SOME MEN WITH GUNS. WE WERE COMING HOME ONE NIGHT. IT WAS LATE AND I FELL ASLEEP IN THE CAR BECAUSE I WAS TIRED. BUT I HEARD MY MOM SCREAM AND SHE WOKE ME UP BEFORE THEY STARTED...
HHAAARRR!
BLOOD WAS EVERYWHERE. I WAS SCARED, SO I RAN AWAY...
AND THE GUYS WITH GUNS? THEY DIDN'T GO AFTER YOU?
THEY DID, BUT I HID IN THE GARBAGE CAN AND THEY DIDN'T SEE ME. AFTER THEY COULDN'T FIND ME, I RAN AWAY...
...I COULDN'T FIND ANYONE ON THE STREETS. EVERYONE WAS SLEEPING. I RAN AWAY WITHOUT LOOKING BACK. FAR. SO FAR I GOT LOST...
?!
WHEN I OPENED MY EYES, I WAS LOCKED IN A CAGE OF THE ORGAN TRAFFICKERS. THAT'S WHEN YOU AND HARRISON FOUND ME.*
6

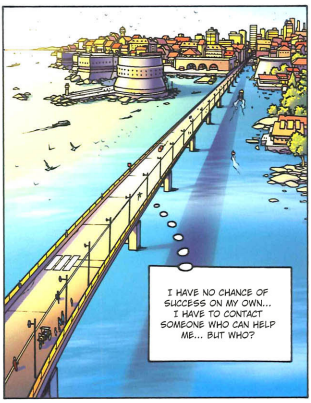
* SEE VOLUME 2.

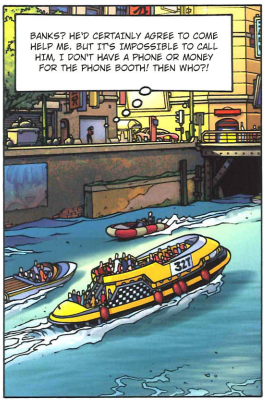
HAAAA!
DON'T WORRY, JIM, IT'S ME!
L... LOLI!!!
I BROUGHT YOU SOMETHING TO EAT!
WHAT IS IT?
SOUP. BE CAREFUL, IT'S VERY HOT. DON'T GET BURNED.
ARH!

COME ON! HURRY!
WHERE ARE WE GOING?
SHHH! BE QUIET AND DON'T MAKE A SOUND.
NOBODY IN SIGHT!
24
ONE WAY
IT'S FINE, THE WAY IS CLEAR! GIVE ME YOUR HAND, JIM, I'LL HELP YOU COME UP!
AND LOLI?
SHE STAYS WHERE SHE IS! ALONG WITH YOU! GET DOWN OR I'LL SHOOT!
?!
?!
3

GET BACK IN THE CELLAR RIGHT NOW, DO YOU UNDERSTAND?! THAT GOES ESPECIALLY FOR YOU, HALF BLOOD!
THIS HALF BLOOD IS TELLING YOU TO GO FUCK YOURSELF!
DATE
XXX PEEP
DID YOU GET HER?
NO, I MISSED! BUT I WON'T MISS YOU!
THAT LITTLE BITCH THREW SOUP ON ME BEFORE SHE HIT ME!
WHEN I SAW YOU WERE SLOW ON YOUR WAY BACK, I KNEW THERE WAS SOMETHING STRANGE GOING ON. THAT'S WHY I CAME DOWN PACKING HEAT.
SORRY, BOSS, THIS IS ALL MY FAULT. I SHOULD HAVE BEEN MORE CAREFUL. THE WORST THING IS THAT SHE WILL TELL EVERYTHING TO THE COPS, AND THEY WILL COME HERE ASKING FOR TROUBLE!
NO, WE DON'T HAVE TO BE AFRAID OF THOSE COWARDS. THE LAST TIME THEY HAD AN ADVENTURE HERE FIVE YEARS AGO, THEY WERE WELCOMED BY MACHINE GUNS. THAT COOLED THEM DOWN REAL NICE! NO ONE IS COMING BACK HERE SINCE THEN.
9


I SHOULDN'T HAVE LEFT LOLI AND HER BROTHER... I DEFINITELY HAVE TO GET THEM OUT... BUT HOW?


I HAVE NO CHANCE OF SUCCESS ON MY OWN... I HAVE TO CONTACT SOMEONE WHO CAN HELP ME... BUT WHO?


BANKS? HE'D CERTAINLY AGREE TO COME HELP ME. BUT IT'S IMPOSSIBLE TO CALL HIM, I DON'T HAVE A PHONE OR MONEY FOR THE PHONE BOOTH! THEN WHO?!

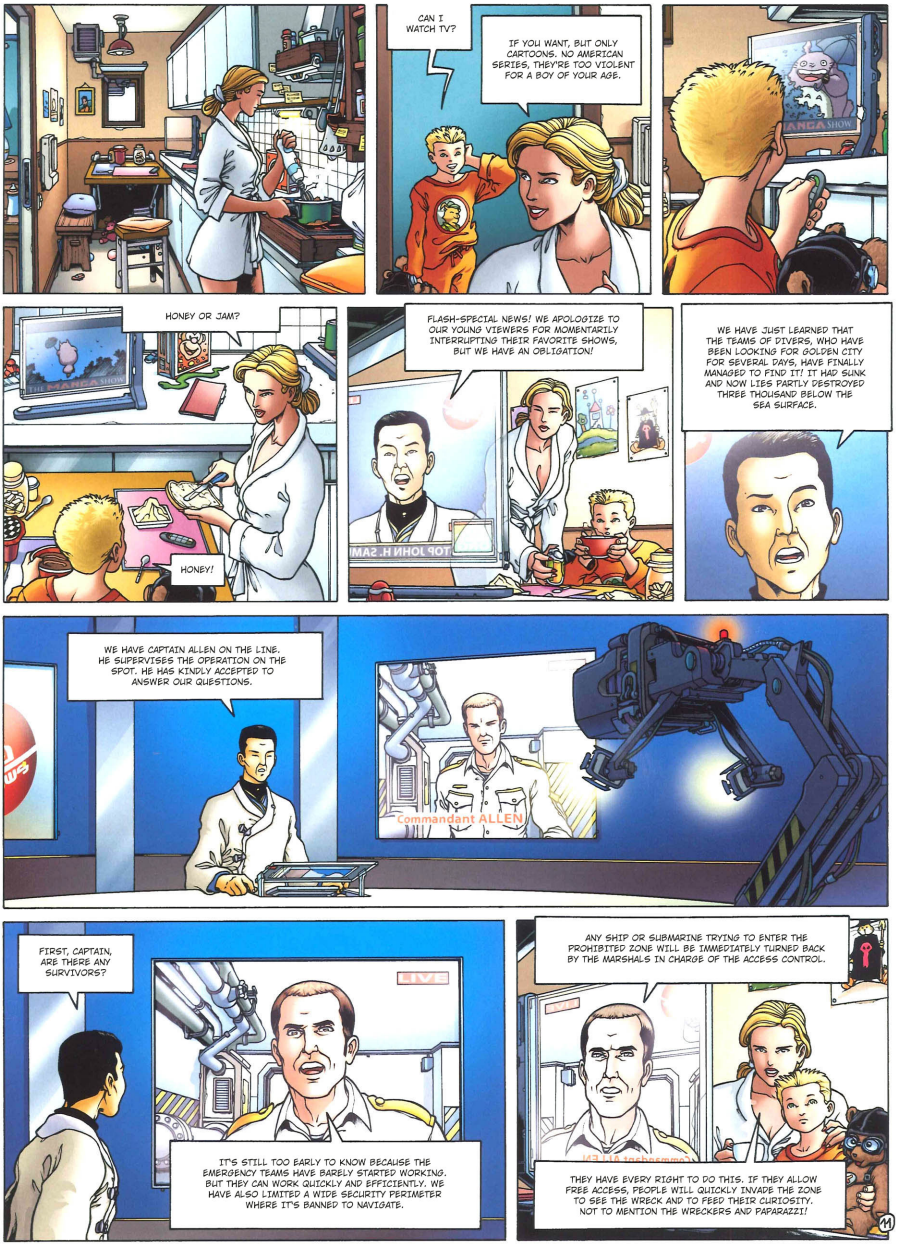
THE COPS? THEY WOULDN'T LISTEN TO ME! EVEN IF I MANAGE TO CONVINCE THEM, THEY WILL NATURALLY WAIT ALL DAY BEFORE THEY DECIDE TO MOVE! THAT'S TOO LONG! IF I WANT TO SAVE LOKI AND JIM I HAVE TO MOVE FAST! VERY FAST! BEFORE MIKHALKOV MOVES THEM SOMEWHERE ELSE!

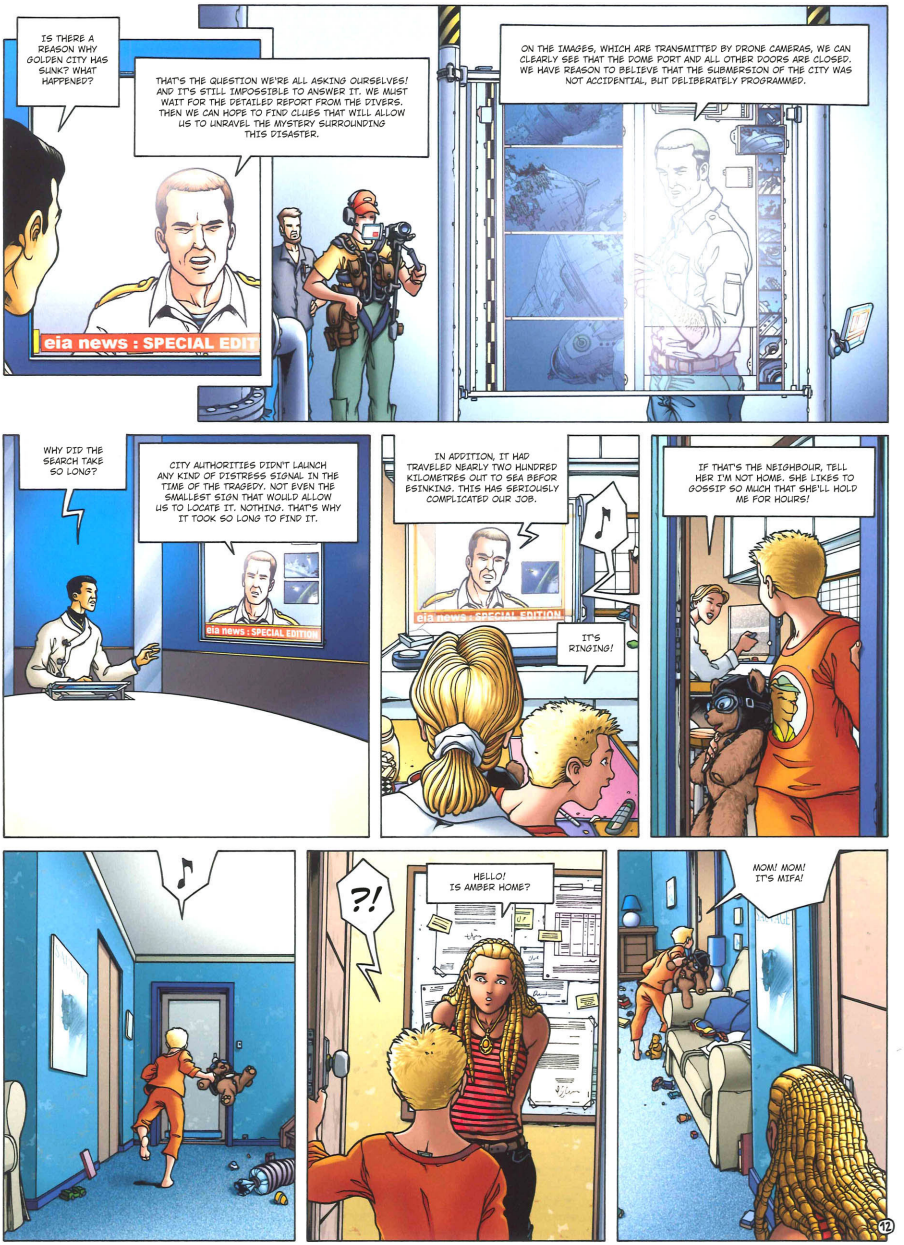
IT'S TIME, DEAR...

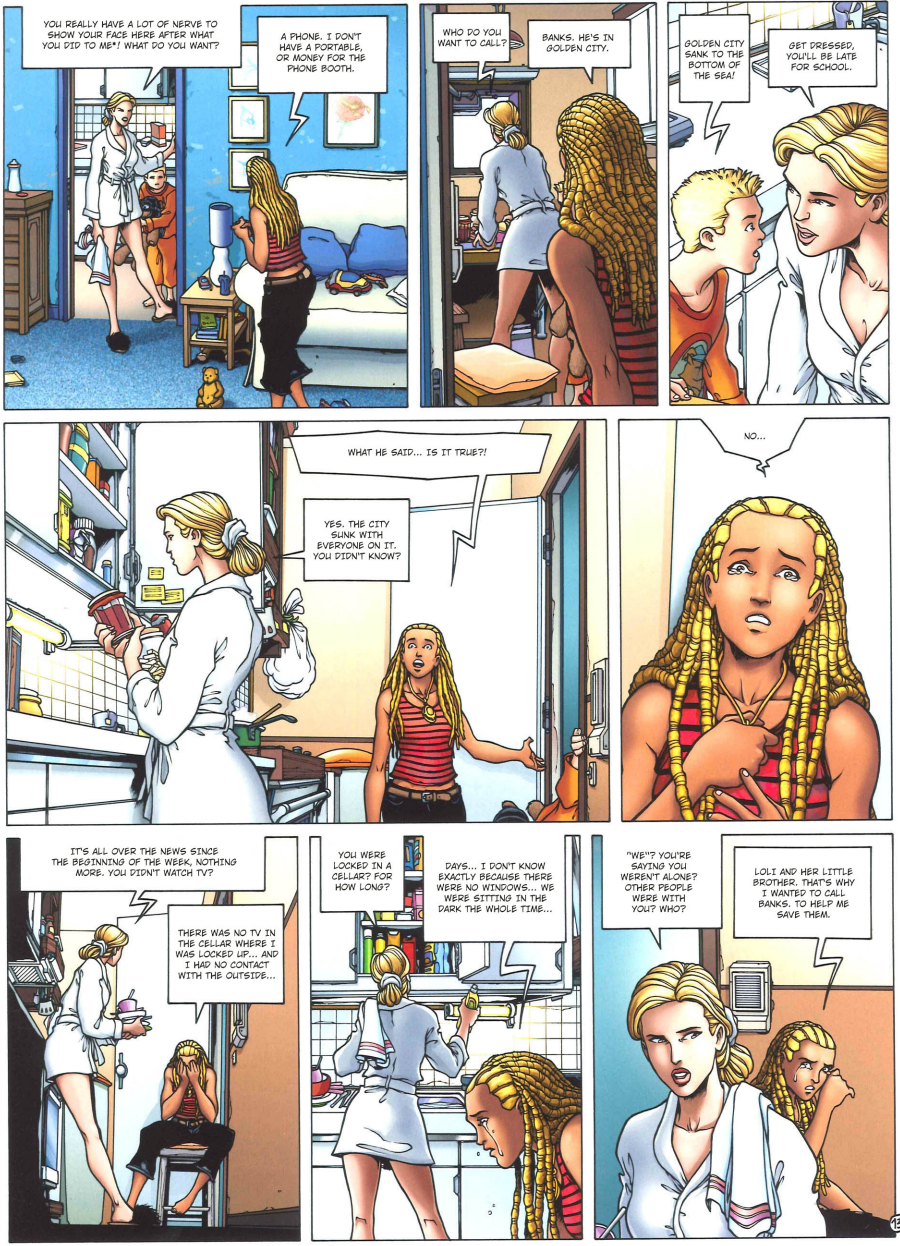
WAKE UP, MY LITTLE MAN, YOUR BREAKFAST IS READY...

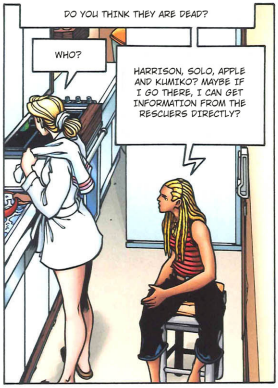
DID YOU SLEEP WELL?
OH, YES! I DREAMT THAT I HAD A DAD!

EVERYONE ELSE HAS A DAD. WHY DON'T I HAVE ONE?
GET UP, YOUR CHOCOLATE WILL GET COLD.
10

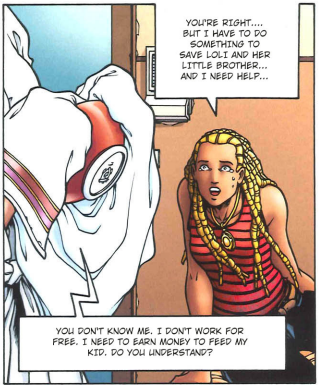

CAN I WATCH TV?
IF YOU WANT, BUT ONLY CARTOONS. NO AMERICAN SERIES, THEY'RE TOO VIOLENT FOR A BOY OF YOUR AGE.
PANDA SHOW
HONEY OR JAM?
HONEY!
FLASH-SPECIAL NEWS! WE APOLOGIZE TO OUR YOUNG VIEWERS FOR MOMENTARILY INTERRUPTING THEIR FAVORITE SHOWS, BUT WE HAVE AN OBLIGATION!
WE HAVE JUST LEARNED THAT THE TEAMS OF DIVERS, WHO HAVE BEEN LOOKING FOR GOLDEN CITY FOR SEVERAL DAYS, HAVE FINALLY MANAGED TO FIND IT! IT HAD SUNK AND NOW LIES PARTLY DESTROYED THREE THOUSAND BELOW THE SEA SURFACE.
WE HAVE CAPTAIN ALLEN ON THE LINE. HE SUPERVISES THE OPERATION ON THE SPOT. HE HAS KINDLY ACCEPTED TO ANSWER OUR QUESTIONS.
Commandant ALLEN
FIRST, CAPTAIN, ARE THERE ANY SURVIVORS?
IT'S STILL TOO EARLY TO KNOW BECAUSE THE EMERGENCY TEAMS HAVE BARELY STARTED WORKING. BUT THEY CAN WORK QUICKLY AND EFFICIENTLY. WE HAVE ALSO LIMITED A WIDE SECURITY PERIMETER WHERE IT'S BANNED TO NAVIGATE.
ANY SHIP OR SUBMARINE TRYING TO ENTER THE PROHIBITED ZONE WILL BE IMMEDIATELY TURNED BACK BY THE MARSHALS IN CHARGE OF THE ACCESS CONTROL.
THEY HAVE EVERY RIGHT TO DO THIS. IF THEY ALLOW FREE ACCESS, PEOPLE WILL QUICKLY INVADE THE ZONE TO SEE THE WRECK AND TO FEED THEIR CURIOSITY. NOT TO MENTION THE WRECKERS AND PAPARAZZI!


IS THERE A REASON WHY GOLDEN CITY HAS SUNK? WHAT HAPPENED?
THAT'S THE QUESTION WE'RE ALL ASKING OURSELVES! AND IT'S STILL IMPOSSIBLE TO ANSWER IT. WE MUST WAIT FOR THE DETAILED REPORT FROM THE DIVERS. THEN WE CAN HOPE TO FIND CLUES THAT WILL ALLOW US TO UNRAVEL THE MYSTERY SURROUNDING THIS DISASTER.
eia news : SPECIAL EDIT
ON THE IMAGES, WHICH ARE TRANSMITTED BY DRONE CAMERAS, WE CAN CLEARLY SEE THAT THE DOME PORT AND ALL OTHER DOORS ARE CLOSED. WE HAVE REASON TO BELIEVE THAT THE SUBMERSION OF THE CITY WAS NOT ACCIDENTIAL, BUT DELIBERATELY PROGRAMMED.
WHY DID THE SEARCH TAKE SO LONG?
CITY AUTHORITIES DIDN'T LAUNCH ANY KIND OF DISTRESS SIGNAL IN THE TIME OF THE TRAGEDY. NOT EVEN THE SMALLEST SIGN THAT WOULD ALLOW US TO LOCATE IT. NOTHING. THAT'S WHY IT TOOK SO LONG TO FIND IT.
eia news : SPECIAL EDITION
IN ADDITION, IT HAD TRAVELED NEARLY TWO HUNDRED KILOMETRES OUT TO SEA BEFOR BSINKING. THIS HAS SERIOUSLY COMPLICATED OUR JOB.
eia news : SPECIAL EDITION
IT'S RINGING!
IF THAT'S THE NEIGHBOUR, TELL HER I'M NOT HOME. SHE LIKES TO GOSSIP SO MUCH THAT SHE'LL HOLD ME FOR HOURS!
?!
HELLO! IS AMBER HOME?
MOM! MOM! IT'S MIFA!
12

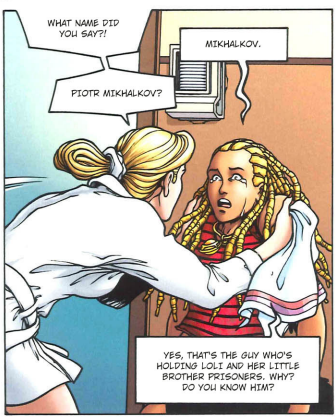

YOU REALLY HAVE A LOT OF NERVE TO SHOW YOUR FACE HERE AFTER WHAT YOU DID TO ME*! WHAT DO YOU WANT?
A PHONE. I DON'T HAVE A PORTABLE, OR MONEY FOR THE PHONE BOOTH.
WHO DO YOU WANT TO CALL?
BANKS. HE'S IN GOLDEN CITY.
GOLDEN CITY SANK TO THE BOTTOM OF THE SEA!
GET DRESSED, YOU'LL BE LATE FOR SCHOOL.
WHAT HE SAID... IS IT TRUE?!
YES. THE CITY SUNK WITH EVERYONE ON IT. YOU DIDN'T KNOW?
NO...
IT'S ALL OVER THE NEWS SINCE THE BEGINNING OF THE WEEK, NOTHING MORE. YOU DIDN'T WATCH TV?
THERE WAS NO TV IN THE CELLAR WHERE I WAS LOCKED UP... AND I HAD NO CONTACT WITH THE OUTSIDE...
YOU WERE LOCKED IN A CELLAR? FOR HOW LONG?
DAYS... I DON'T KNOW EXACTLY BECAUSE THERE WERE NO WINDOWS... WE WERE SITTING IN THE DARK THE WHOLE TIME...
"WE"? YOU'RE SAYING YOU WEREN'T ALONE? OTHER PEOPLE WERE WITH YOU? WHO?
LOLI AND HER LITTLE BROTHER. THAT'S WHY I WANTED TO CALL BANKS. TO HELP ME SAVE THEM.
13

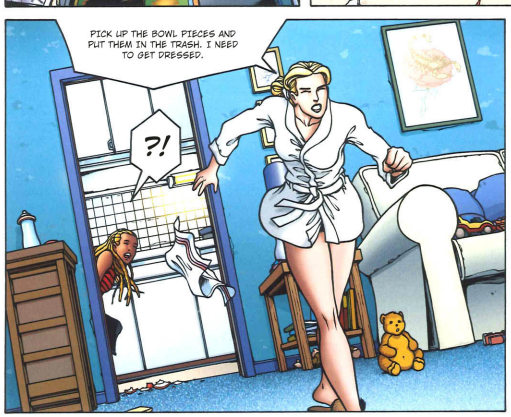

DO YOU THINK THEY ARE DEAD?
WHO?
HARRISON, SOLO, APPLE AND KUMIKO? MAYBE IF I GO THERE, I CAN GET INFORMATION FROM THE RESCUERS DIRECTLY?

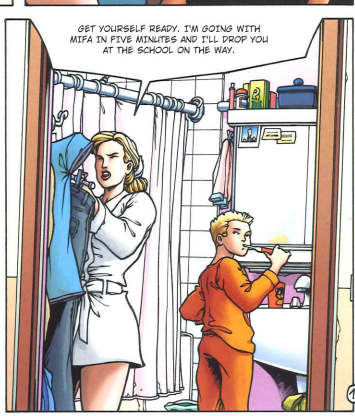
NO, YOU'D JUST BE SENT BACK. THEY DON'T LET ANYONE APPROACH. IT WAS JUST SAID ON THE NEWS. LET THEM DO THEIR JOB. THEY CAN SAVE BANKS AND YOUR FRIENDS, EVEN IF THEY SURVIVED THE DISASTER. YOU CAN'T DO ANYTHING FOR THEM.

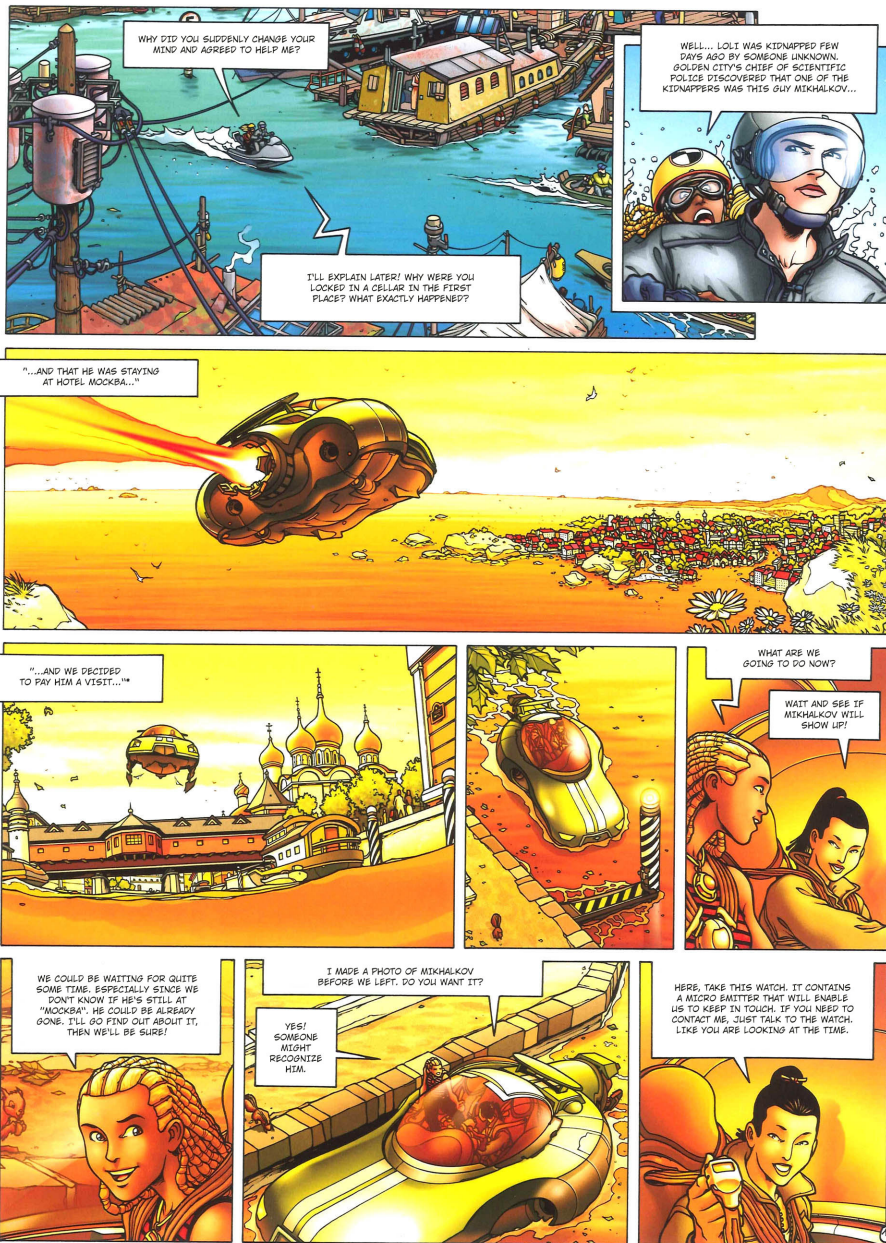

YOU'RE RIGHT.... BUT I HAVE TO DO SOMETHING TO SAVE LOLI AND HER LITTLE BROTHER... AND I NEED HELP...
YOU DON'T KNOW ME. I DON'T WORK FOR FREE. I NEED TO EARN MONEY TO FEED MY KID. DO YOU UNDERSTAND?

YOU DON'T KNOW ANYONE WHO COULD HELP YOU?
NO... AND I DON'T STAND A CHANCE AGAINST MIKHALKOV ON MY OWN.


WHAT NAME DID YOU SAY?!
MIKHALKOV.
PIOTR MIKHALKOV?
YES, THAT'S THE GUY WHO'S HOLDING LOLI AND HER LITTLE BROTHER PRISONERS. WHY? DO YOU KNOW HIM?

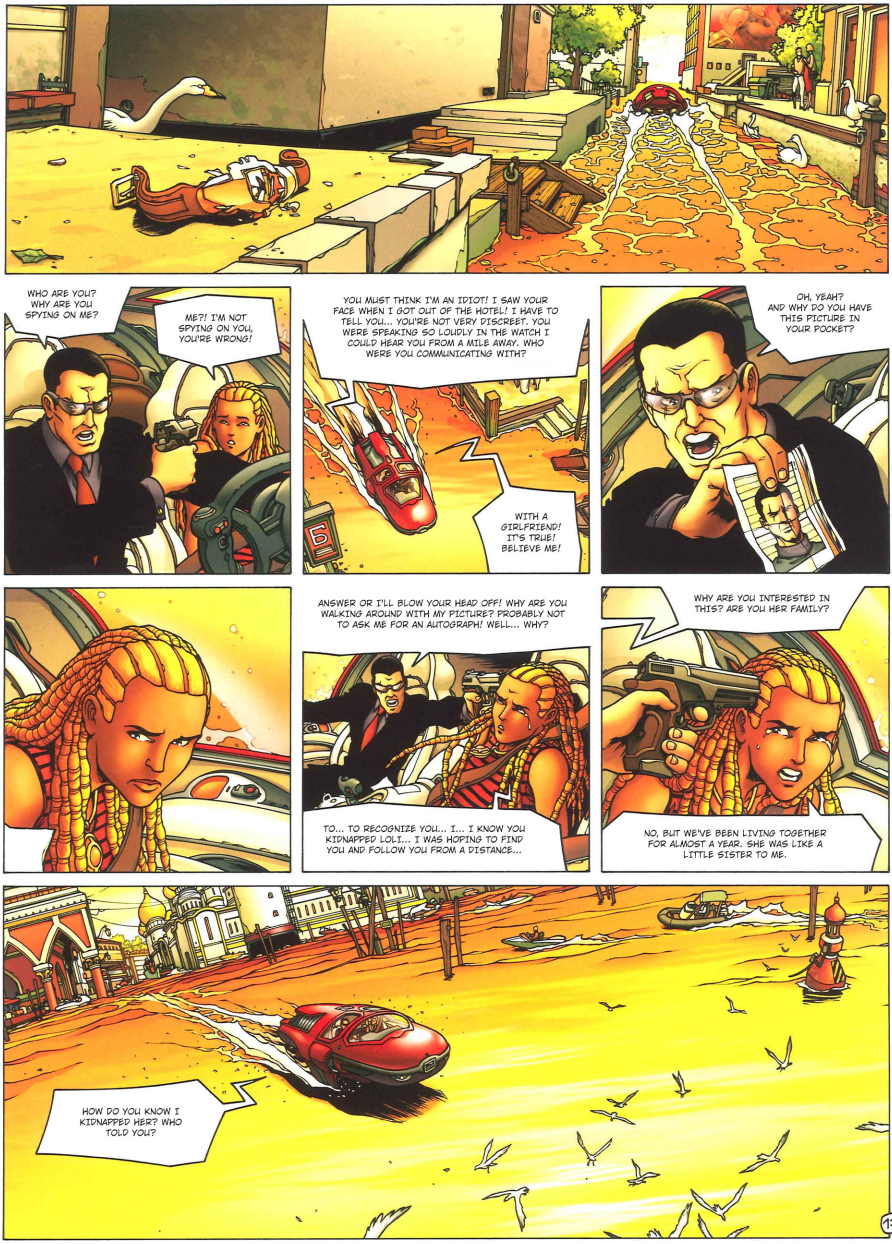

PICK UP THE BOWL PIECES AND PUT THEM IN THE TRASH. I NEED TO GET DRESSED.
?!

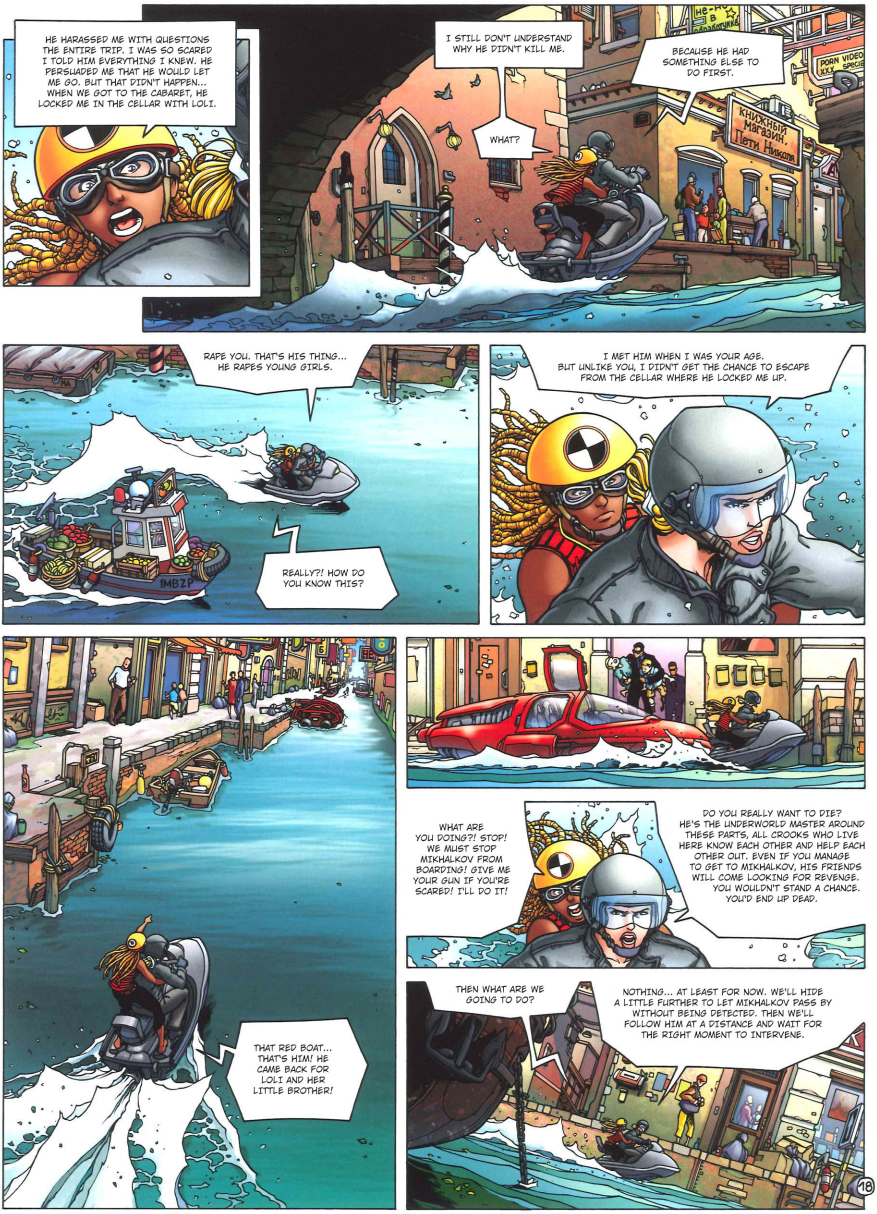

GET YOURSELF READY. I'M GOING WITH MIFA IN FIVE MINUTES AND I'LL DROP YOU AT THE SCHOOL ON THE WAY.
14

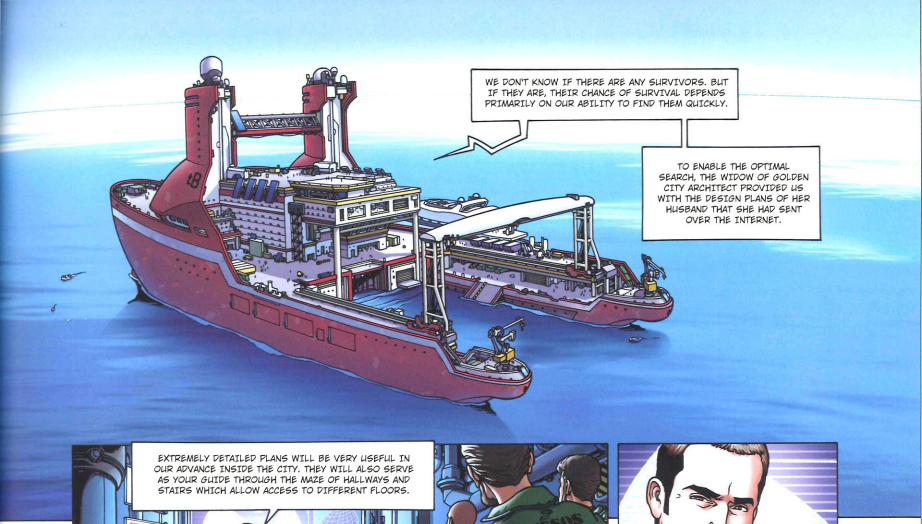

WHY DID YOU SUDDENLY CHANGE YOUR MIND AND AGREED TO HELP ME?
I'LL EXPLAIN LATER! WHY WERE YOU LOCKED IN A CELLAR IN THE FIRST PLACE? WHAT EXACTLY HAPPENED?
WELL... LOLI WAS KIDNAPPED FEW DAYS AGO BY SOMEONE UNKNOWN. GOLDEN CITY'S CHIEF OF SCIENTIFIC POLICE DISCOVERED THAT ONE OF THE KIDNAPPERS WAS THIS GUY MIKHALKOV...
"...AND THAT HE WAS STAYING AT HOTEL MOCKBA..."
"...AND WE DECIDED TO PAY HIM A VISIT..."*
WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO NOW?
WAIT AND SEE IF MIKHALKOV WILL SHOW UP!
WE COULD BE WAITING FOR QUITE SOME TIME. ESPECIALLY SINCE WE DON'T KNOW IF HE'S STILL AT "MOCKBA". HE COULD BE ALREADY GONE. I'LL GO FIND OUT ABOUT IT, THEN WE'LL BE SURE!
I MADE A PHOTO OF MIKHALKOV BEFORE WE LEFT. DO YOU WANT IT?
YES! SOMEONE MIGHT RECOGNIZE HIM.
HERE, TAKE THIS WATCH. IT CONTAINS A MICRO EMITTER THAT WILL ENABLE US TO KEEP IN TOUCH. IF YOU NEED TO CONTACT ME, JUST TALK TO THE WATCH. LIKE YOU ARE LOOKING AT THE TIME.
15

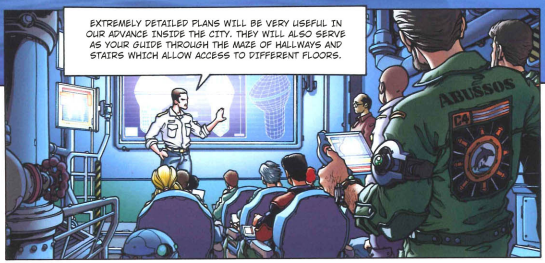
*SEE VOLUME 7.

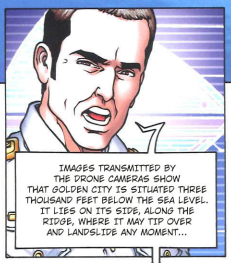
CAN YOU HEAR ME?
YES.
MIKHALKOV IS LEAVING THE HOTEL. I'LL FOLLOW HIM.
THAT'S OUT OF THE QUESTION! YOU DON'T HAVE EXPERIENCE AT SHADOWING PEOPLE. YOU MIGHT GET CAUGHT...
YOU THINK I'M SOME KIND OF A ROOKIE? I'LL STAY AWAY FROM HIM...
THAT WAY HE WON'T SUSPECT A THING AND I...
HELLO? HELLO, MIFA? I CAN'T HEAR YOU ANYMORE! HELLO?
HELLO? MIFA, CAN YOU HER ME? WHAT'S GOING ON? HELLO?
GET INSIDE! HURRY! AND TRY NOT TO ALERT ANYONE OR I'LL SHOOT YOU!
60 TYPES
DES
16

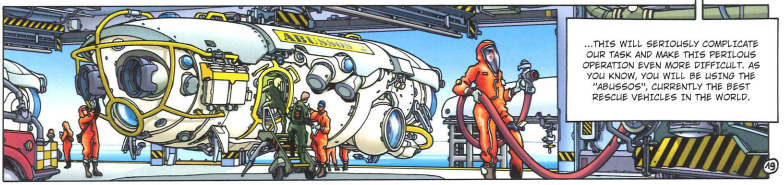

WHO ARE YOU? WHY ARE YOU SPYING ON ME?
ME?! I'M NOT SPYING ON YOU, YOU'RE WRONG!
YOU MUST THINK I'M AN IDIOT! I SAW YOUR FACE WHEN I GOT OUT OF THE HOTEL! I HAVE TO TELL YOU... YOU'RE NOT VERY DISCREET. YOU WERE SPEAKING SO LOUDLY IN THE WATCH I COULD HEAR YOU FROM A MILE AWAY. WHO WERE YOU COMMUNICATING WITH?
WITH A GIRLFRIEND! IT'S TRUE! BELIEVE ME!
OH, YEAH? AND WHY DO YOU HAVE THIS PICTURE IN YOUR POCKET?
ANSWER OR I'LL BLOW YOUR HEAD OFF! WHY ARE YOU WALKING AROUND WITH MY PICTURE? PROBABLY NOT TO ASK ME FOR AN AUTOGRAPH! WELL... WHY?
TO... TO RECOGNIZE YOU... I... I KNOW YOU KIDNAPPED LOLI... I WAS HOPING TO FIND YOU AND FOLLOW YOU FROM A DISTANCE...
WHY ARE YOU INTERESTED IN THIS? ARE YOU HER FAMILY?
NO, BUT WE'VE BEEN LIVING TOGETHER FOR ALMOST A YEAR. SHE WAS LIKE A LITTLE SISTER TO ME.
HOW DO YOU KNOW I KIDNAPPED HER? WHO TOLD YOU?
13

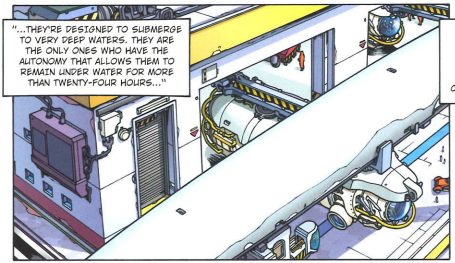

HE HARASSED ME WITH QUESTIONS THE ENTIRE TRIP. I WAS SO SCARED I TOLD HIM EVERYTHING I KNEW. HE PERSUADED ME THAT HE WOULD LET ME GO. BUT THAT DIDN'T HAPPEN... WHEN WE GOT TO THE CABARET, HE LOCKED ME IN THE CELLAR WITH LOLI.
I STILL DON'T UNDERSTAND WHY HE DIDN'T KILL ME.
BECAUSE HE HAD SOMETHING ELSE TO DO FIRST.
WHAT?
RAPE YOU. THAT'S HIS THING... HE RAPES YOUNG GIRLS.
REALLY?! HOW DO YOU KNOW THIS?
I MET HIM WHEN I WAS YOUR AGE. BUT UNLIKE YOU, I DIDN'T GET THE CHANCE TO ESCAPE FROM THE CELLAR WHERE HE LOCKED ME UP.
THAT RED BOAT... THAT'S HIM! HE CAME BACK FOR LOLI AND HER LITTLE BROTHER!
WHAT ARE YOU DOING?! STOP! WE MUST STOP MIKHALKOV FROM BOARDING! GIVE ME YOUR GUN IF YOU'RE SCARED! I'LL DO IT!
DO YOU REALLY WANT TO DIE? HE'S THE UNDERWORLD MASTER AROUND THESE PARTS, ALL CROOKS WHO LIVE HERE KNOW EACH OTHER AND HELP EACH OTHER OUT. EVEN IF YOU MANAGE TO GET TO MIKHALKOV, HIS FRIENDS WILL COME LOOKING FOR REVENGE. YOU WOULDN'T STAND A CHANCE. YOU'D END UP DEAD.
THEN WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO?
NOTHING... AT LEAST FOR NOW. WE'LL HIDE A LITTLE FURTHER TO LET MIKHALKOV PASS BY WITHOUT BEING DETECTED. THEN WE'LL FOLLOW HIM AT A DISTANCE AND WAIT FOR THE RIGHT MOMENT TO INTERVENE.
18

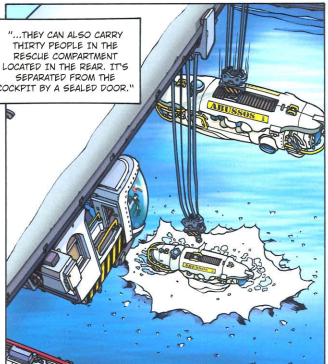

WE DON'T KNOW IF THERE ARE ANY SURVIVORS. BUT IF THEY ARE, THEIR CHANCE OF SURVIVAL DEPENDS PRIMARILY ON OUR ABILITY TO FIND THEM QUICKLY.
TO ENABLE THE OPTIMAL SEARCH, THE WIDOW OF GOLDEN CITY ARCHITECT PROVIDED US WITH THE DESIGN PLANS OF HER HUSBAND THAT SHE HAD SENT OVER THE INTERNET.

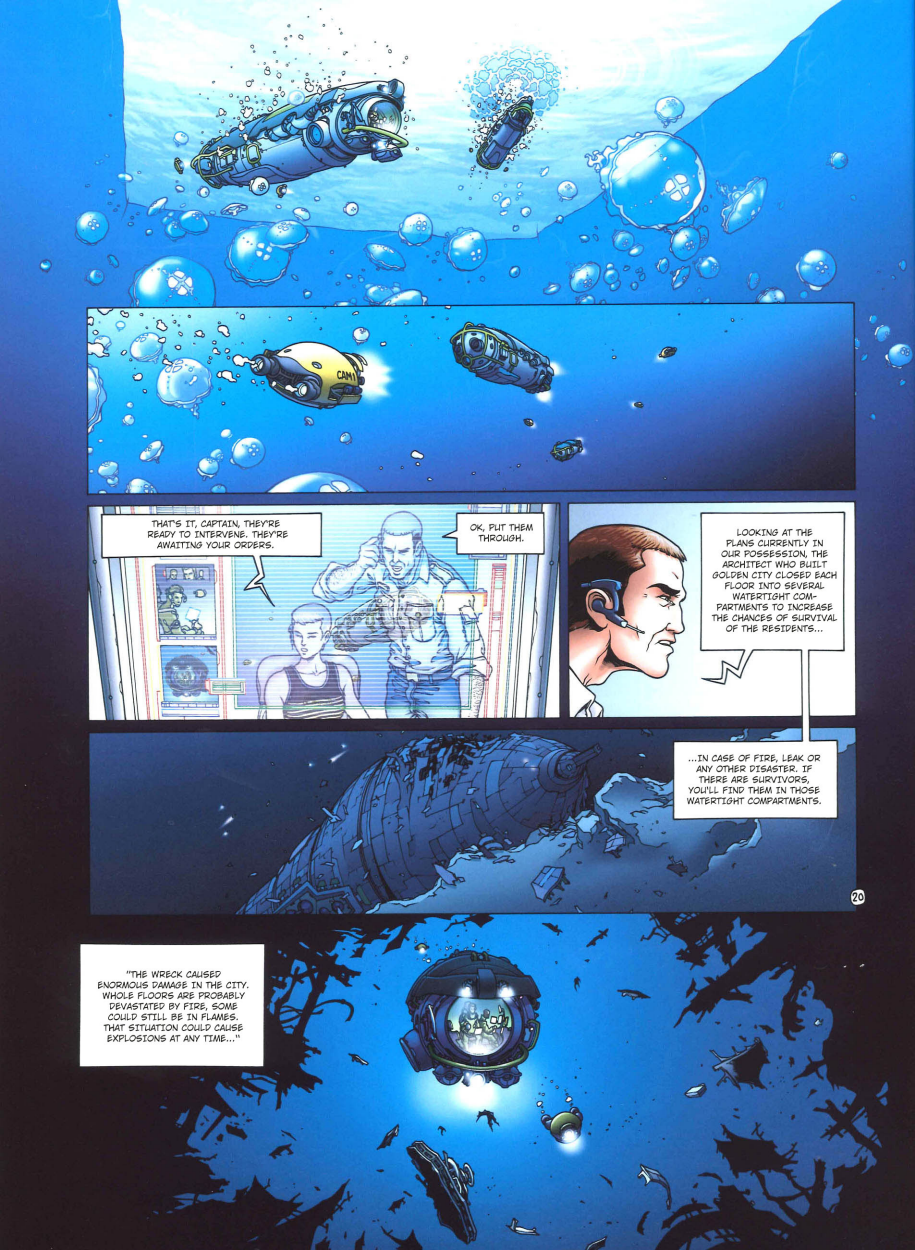

EXTREMELY DETAILED PLANS WILL BE VERY USEFUL IN OUR ADVANCE INSIDE THE CITY. THEY WILL ALSO SERVE AS YOUR GUIDE THROUGH THE MAZE OF HALLWAYS AND STAIRS WHICH ALLOW ACCESS TO DIFFERENT FLOORS.
ABUSSOS

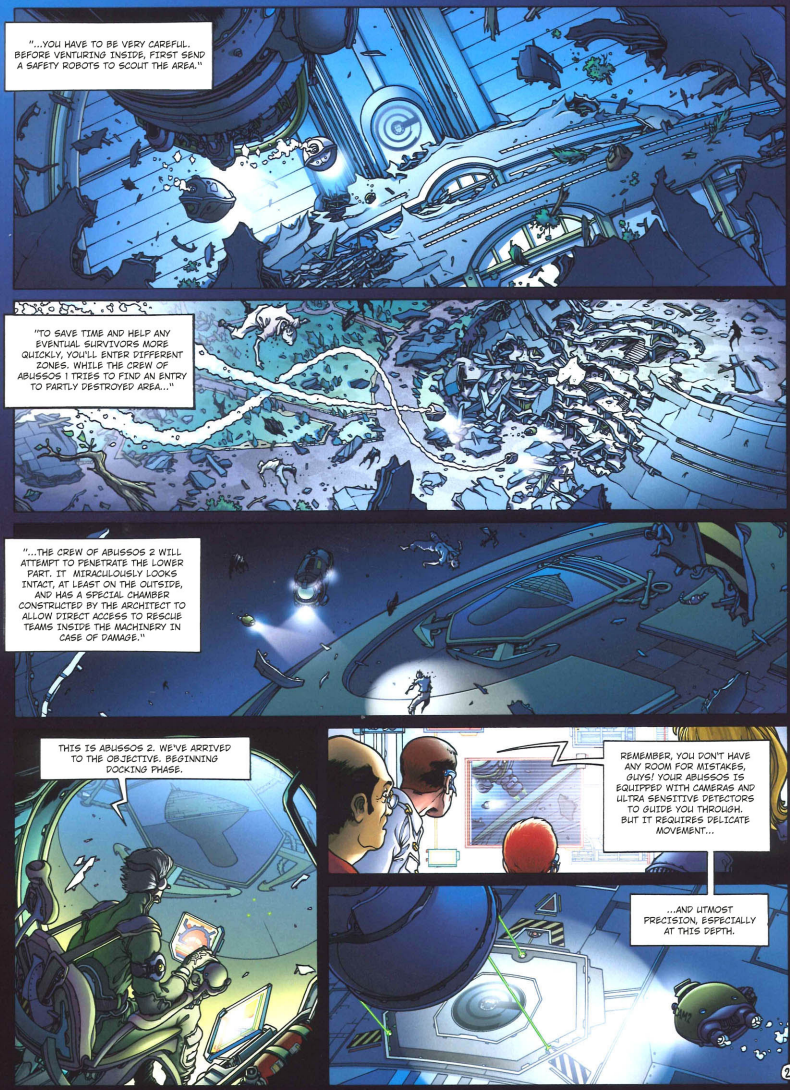

IMAGES TRANSMITTED BY THE DRONE CAMERAS SHOW THAT GOLDEN CITY IS SITUATED THREE THOUSAND FEET BELOW THE SEA LEVEL. IT LIES ON ITS SIDE, ALONG THE RIDGE, WHERE IT MAY TIP OVER AND LANDSLIDE ANY MOMENT...

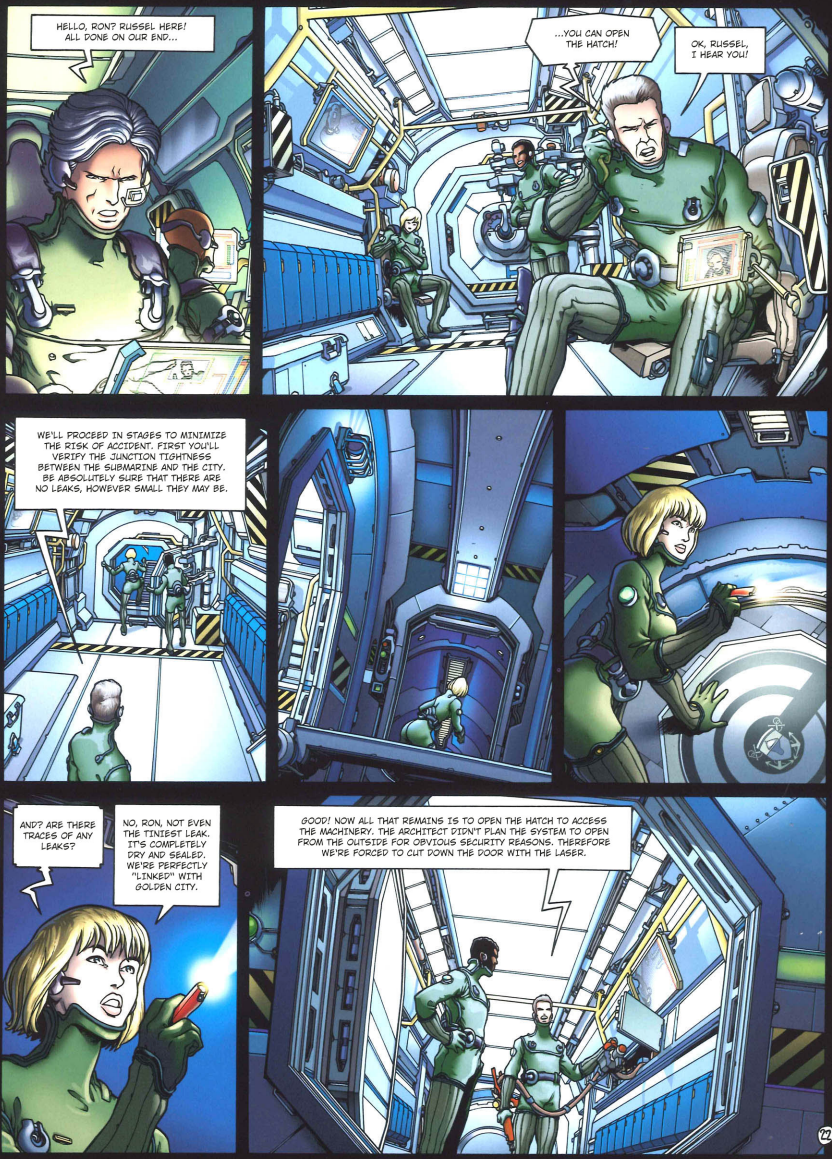

ABUSSOS
...THIS WILL SERIOUSLY COMPLICATE OUR TASK AND MAKE THIS PERILOUS OPERATION EVEN MORE DIFFICULT. AS YOU KNOW, YOU WILL BE USING THE "ABUSSOS", CURRENTLY THE BEST RESCUE VEHICLES IN THE WORLD.
49

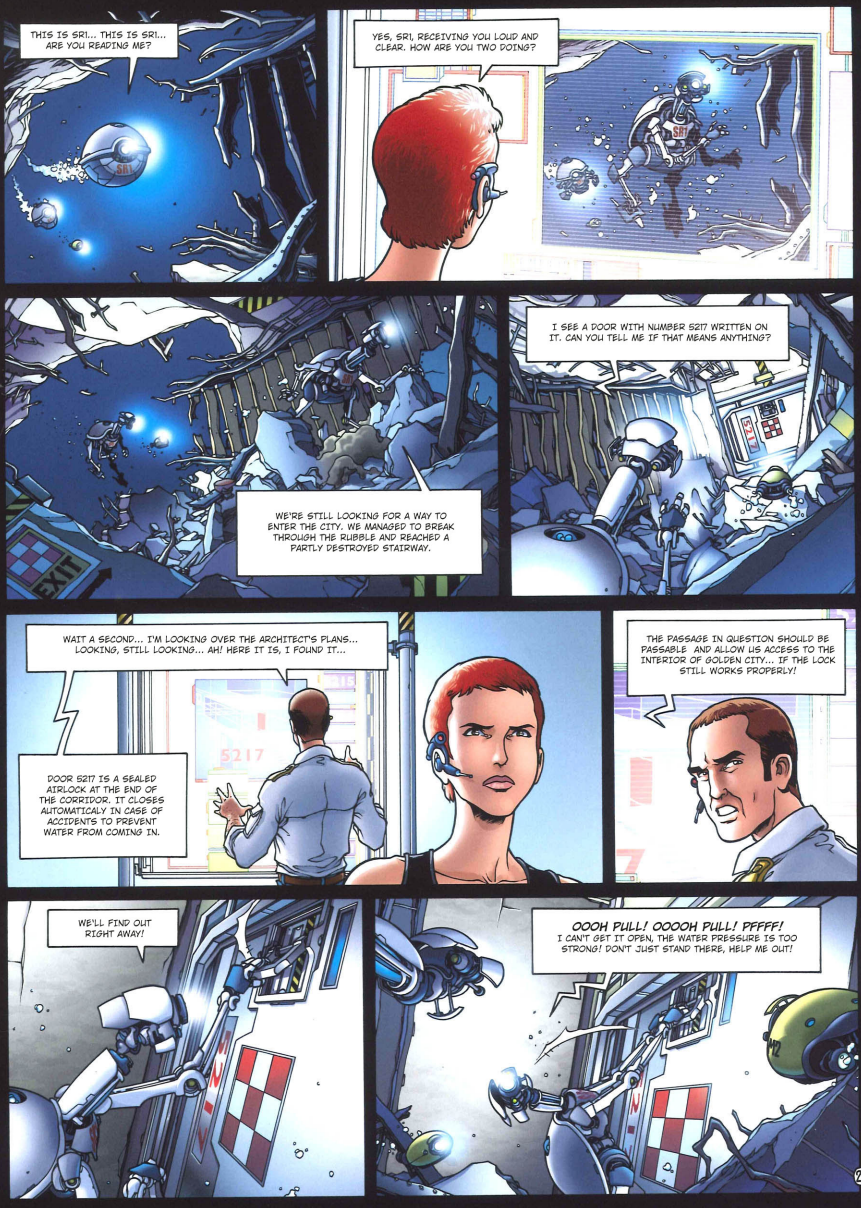

"...THEY'RE DESIGNED TO SUBMERGE TO VERY DEEP WATERS. THEY ARE THE ONLY ONES WHO HAVE THE AUTONOMY THAT ALLOWS THEM TO REMAIN UNDER WATER FOR MORE THAN TWENTY-FOUR HOURS..."


"...THEY CAN ALSO CARRY THIRTY PEOPLE IN THE RESCUE COMPARTMENT LOCATED IN THE REAR. IT'S SEPARATED FROM THE COCKPIT BY A SEALED DOOR."
ABUSSOS

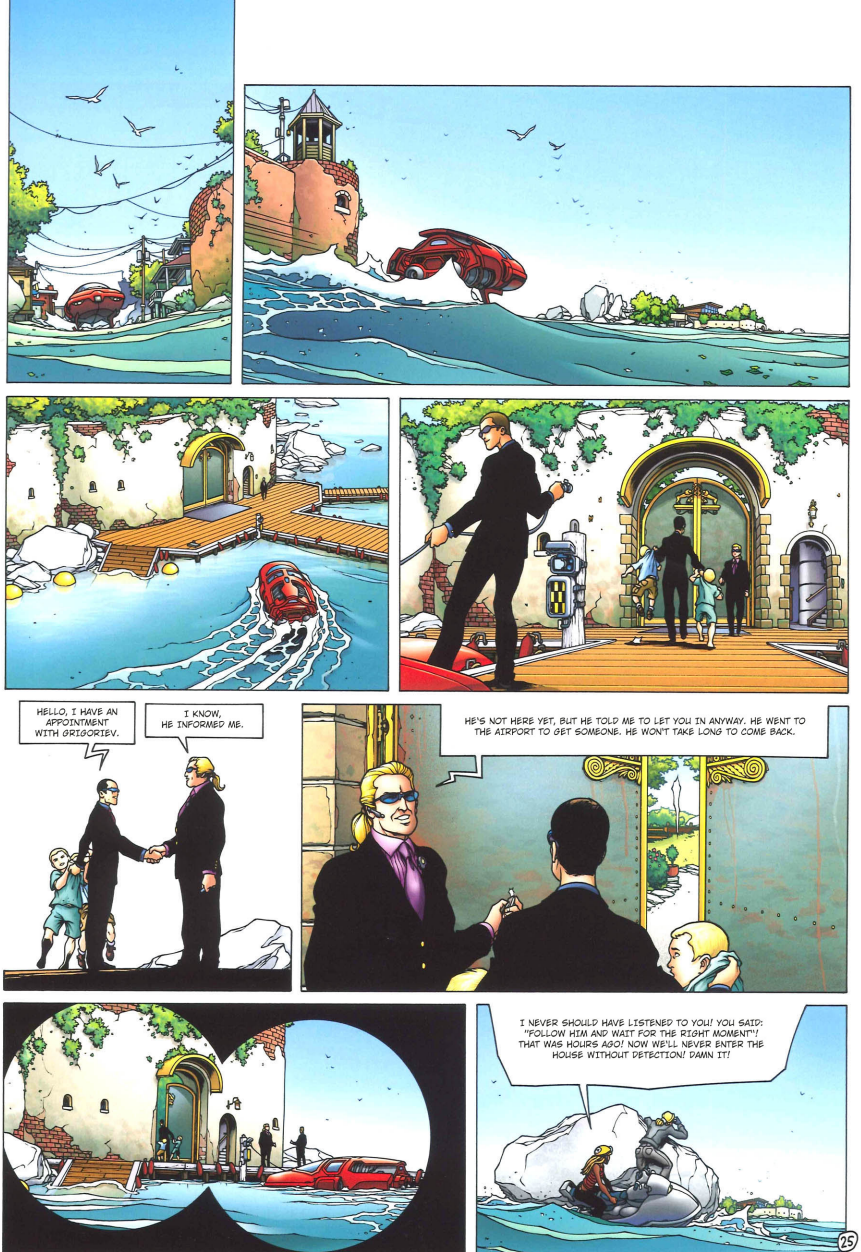

THAT'S IT, CAPTAIN, THEY'RE READY TO INTERVENE. THEY'RE AWAITING YOUR ORDERS.
OK, PUT THEM THROUGH.
LOOKING AT THE PLANS CURRENTLY IN OUR POSSESSION, THE ARCHITECT WHO BUILT GOLDEN CITY CLOSED EACH FLOOR INTO SEVERAL WATERTIGHT COMPARTMENTS TO INCREASE THE CHANCES OF SURVIVAL OF THE RESIDENTS...
...IN CASE OF FIRE, LEAK OR ANY OTHER DISASTER, IF THERE ARE SURVIVORS, YOU'LL FIND THEM IN THOSE WATERTIGHT COMPARTMENTS.
"THE WRECK CAUSED ENORMOUS DAMAGE IN THE CITY. WHOLE FLOORS ARE PROBABLY DEVASTATED BY FIRE, SOME COULD STILL BE IN FLAMES. THAT SITUATION COULD CAUSE EXPLOSIONS AT ANY TIME..."

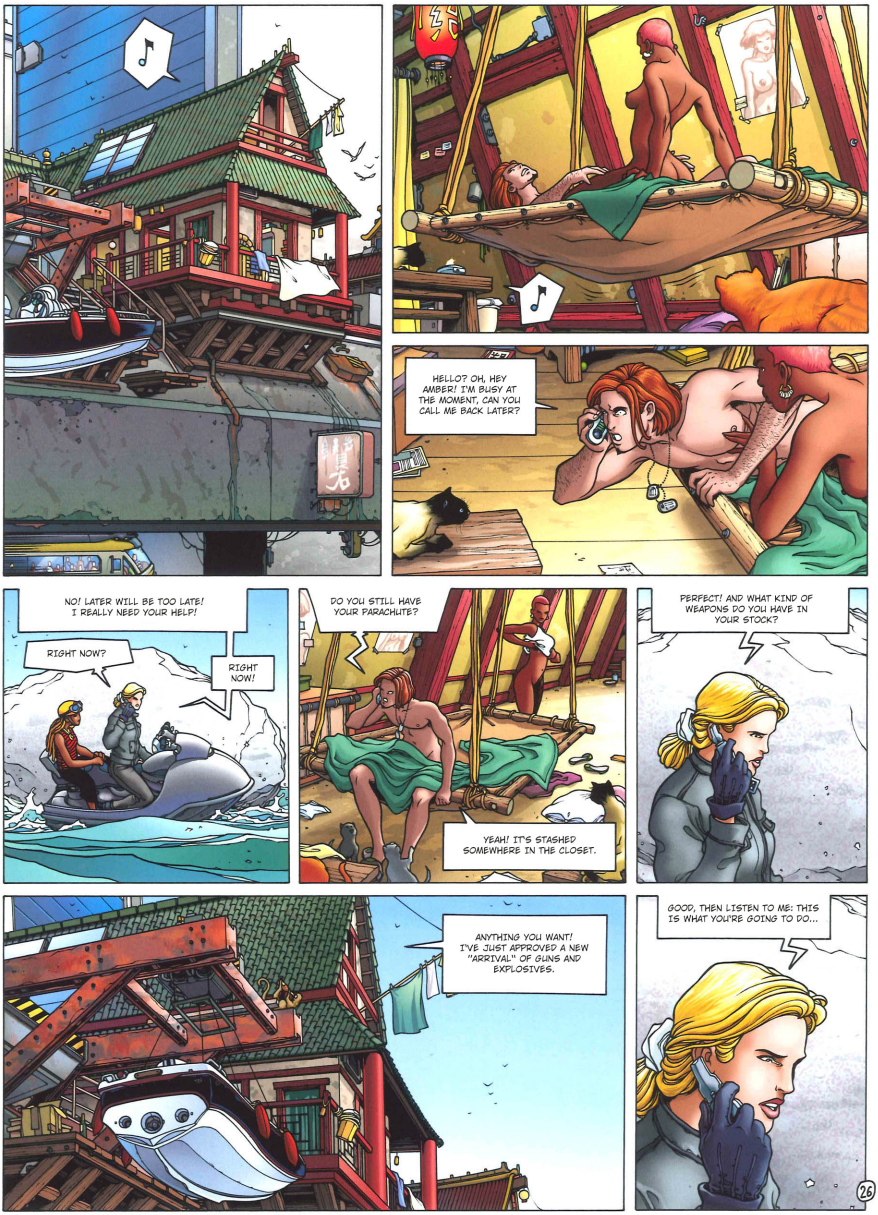

"...YOU HAVE TO BE VERY CAREFUL. BEFORE VENTURING INSIDE, FIRST SEND A SAFETY ROBOTS TO SCOUT THE AREA."
"TO SAVE TIME AND HELP ANY EVENTUAL SURVIVORS MORE QUICKLY, YOU'LL ENTER DIFFERENT ZONES. WHILE THE CREW OF ABUSSOS I TRIES TO FIND AN ENTRY TO PARTLY DESTROYED AREA..."
"...THE CREW OF ABUSSOS 2 WILL ATTEMPT TO PENETRATE THE LOWER PART. IT MIRACULOUSLY LOOKS INTACT, AT LEAST ON THE OUTSIDE, AND HAS A SPECIAL CHAMBER CONSTRUCTED BY THE ARCHITECT TO ALLOW DIRECT ACCESS TO RESCUE TEAMS INSIDE THE MACHINERY IN CASE OF DAMAGE."
THIS IS ABUSSOS 2. WE'VE ARRIVED TO THE OBJECTIVE. BEGINNING DOCKING PHASE.
REMEMBER, YOU DON'T HAVE ANY ROOM FOR MISTAKES, GUYS! YOUR ABUSSOS IS EQUIPPED WITH CAMERAS AND ULTRA SENSITIVE DETECTORS TO GUIDE YOU THROUGH. BUT IT REQUIRES DELICATE MOVEMENT...
...AND UTMOST PRECISION, ESPECIALLY AT THIS DEPTH.
21

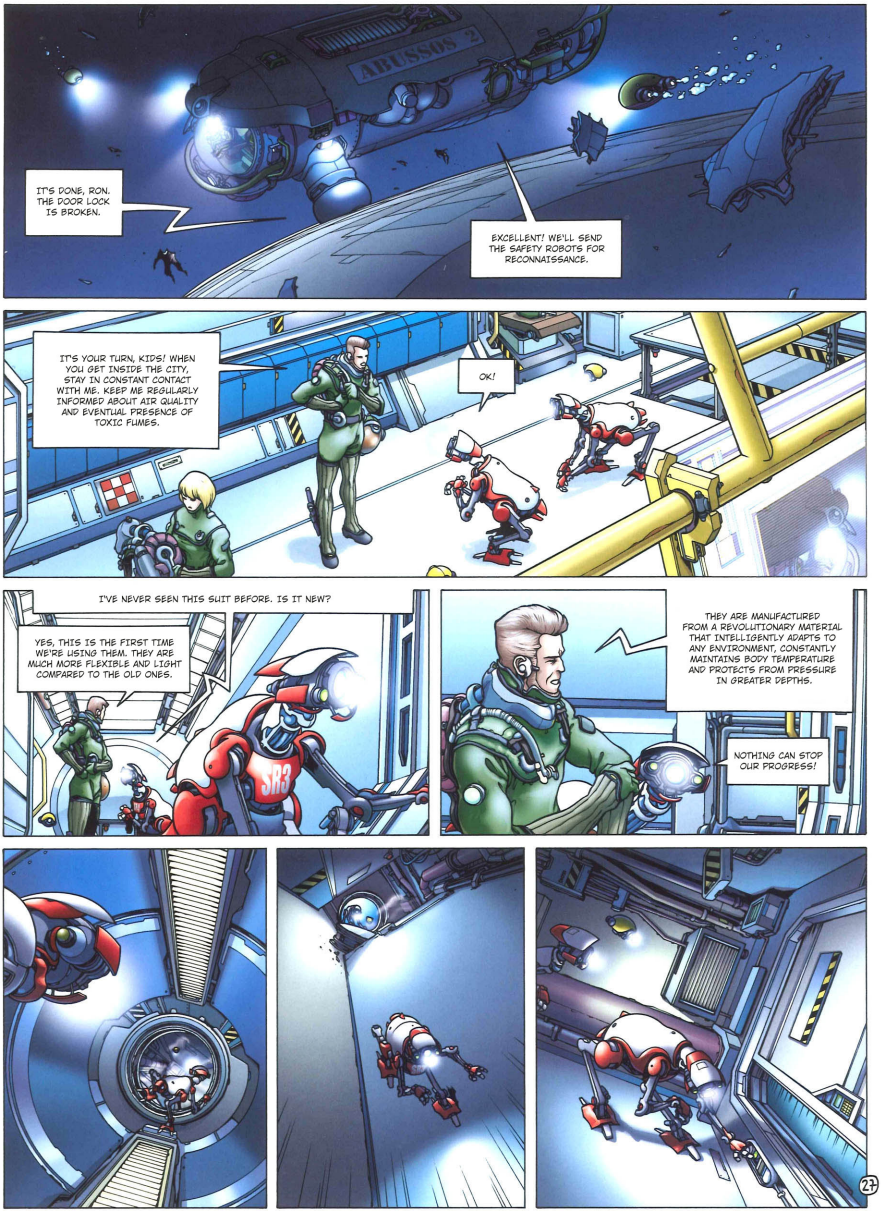

HELLO, RON? RUSSEL HERE! ALL DONE ON OUR END...
...YOU CAN OPEN THE HATCH!
OK, RUSSEL, I HEAR YOU!
WE'LL PROCEED IN STAGES TO MINIMIZE THE RISK OF ACCIDENT. FIRST YOU'LL VERIFY THE JUNCTION TIGHTNESS BETWEEN THE SUBMARINE AND THE CITY. BE ABSOLUTELY SURE THAT THERE ARE NO LEAKS, HOWEVER SMALL THEY MAY BE.
AND? ARE THERE TRACES OF ANY LEAKS?
NO, RON, NOT EVEN THE TINIEST LEAK. IT'S COMPLETELY DRY AND SEALED. WE'RE PERFECTLY "LINKED" WITH GOLDEN CITY.
GOOD! NOW ALL THAT REMAINS IS TO OPEN THE HATCH TO ACCESS THE MACHINERY. THE ARCHITECT DIDN'T PLAN THE SYSTEM TO OPEN FROM THE OUTSIDE FOR OBVIOUS SECURITY REASONS. THEREFORE WE'RE FORCED TO CUT DOWN THE DOOR WITH THE LASER.
24


THIS IS SR1... THIS IS SR1... ARE YOU READING ME?
YES, SR1, RECEIVING YOU LOUD AND CLEAR. HOW ARE YOU TWO DOING?
WE'RE STILL LOOKING FOR A WAY TO ENTER THE CITY. WE MANAGED TO BREAK THROUGH THE RUBBLE AND REACHED A PARTLY DESTROYED STAIRWAY.
I SEE A DOOR WITH NUMBER 5217 WRITTEN ON IT. CAN YOU TELL ME IF THAT MEANS ANYTHING?
WAIT A SECOND... I'M LOOKING OVER THE ARCHITECT'S PLANS... LOOKING, STILL LOOKING... AH! HERE IT IS, I FOUND IT...
DOOR 5217 IS A SEALED AIRLOCK AT THE END OF THE CORRIDOR. IT CLOSES AUTOMATICALY IN CASE OF ACCIDENTS TO PREVENT WATER FROM COMING IN.
THE PASSAGE IN QUESTION SHOULD BE PASSABLE AND ALLOW US ACCESS TO THE INTERIOR OF GOLDEN CITY... IF THE LOCK STILL WORKS PROPERLY!
WE'LL FIND OUT RIGHT AWAY!
OOOH PULL! OOOOH PULL! PFFFF! I CAN'T GET IT OPEN, THE WATER PRESSURE IS TOO STRONG! DON'T JUST STAND THERE, HELP ME OUT!

YOU SHOULD DO SOME PUSH-UPS TO BUILD THOSE MUSCLES!
THOSE TWO ARE STILL IN THE PROCESS OF TRAINING!
YES, BUT THEY'RE A GREAT TEAM BECAUSE THEY COMPLEMENT EACH OTHER.
CAM 1
?!
SR1 HERE... SR1 HERE... DO YOU READ ME? WE FOUND A SURVIVOR! I REPEAT! WE FOUND A SURVIVOR!
24


HELLO, I HAVE AN APPOINTMENT WITH GRIGORIEV.
I KNOW. HE INFORMED ME.
HE'S NOT HERE YET, BUT HE TOLD ME TO LET YOU IN ANYWAY. HE WENT TO THE AIRPORT TO GET SOMEONE. HE WON'T TAKE LONG TO COME BACK.
I NEVER SHOULD HAVE LISTENED TO YOU! YOU SAID: "FOLLOW HIM AND WAIT FOR THE RIGHT MOMENT"! THAT WAS HOURS AGO! NOW WE'LL NEVER ENTER THE HOUSE WITHOUT DETECTION! DAMN IT!
25


HELLO? OH, HEY AMBER! I'M BUSY AT THE MOMENT, CAN YOU CALL ME BACK LATER?
NO! LATER WILL BE TOO LATE! I REALLY NEED YOUR HELP!
RIGHT NOW?
RIGHT NOW!
DO YOU STILL HAVE YOUR PARACHUTE?
YEAH! IT'S STASHED SOMEWHERE IN THE CLOSET.
PERFECT! AND WHAT KIND OF WEAPONS DO YOU HAVE IN YOUR STOCK?
ANYTHING YOU WANT! I'VE JUST APPROVED A NEW "ARRIVAL" OF GUNS AND EXPLOSIVES.
GOOD, THEN LISTEN TO ME: THIS IS WHAT YOU'RE GOING TO DO...
26

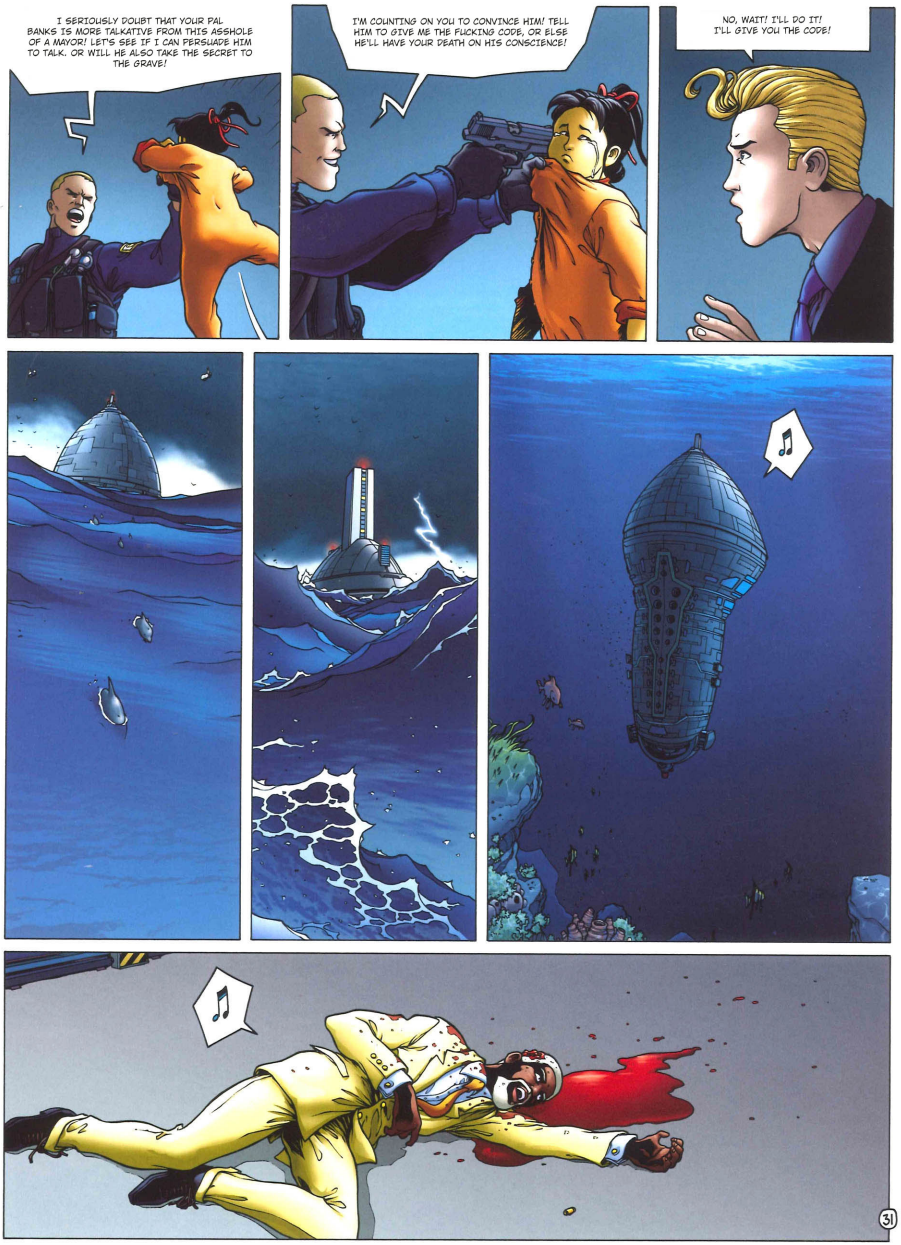

ABYSSOS 2
IT'S DONE, RON. THE DOOR LOCK IS BROKEN.
EXCELLENT! WE'LL SEND THE SAFETY ROBOTS FOR RECONNAISSANCE.
IT'S YOUR TURN, KIDS! WHEN YOU GET INSIDE THE CITY, STAY IN CONSTANT CONTACT WITH ME. KEEP ME REGULARLY INFORMED ABOUT AIR QUALITY AND EVENTUAL PRESENCE OF TOXIC FUMES.
OK!
I'VE NEVER SEEN THIS SUIT BEFORE. IS IT NEW?
YES, THIS IS THE FIRST TIME WE'RE USING THEM. THEY ARE MUCH MORE FLEXIBLE AND LIGHT COMPARED TO THE OLD ONES.
SR3
THEY ARE MANUFACTURED FROM A REVOLUTIONARY MATERIAL THAT INTELLIGENTLY ADAPTS TO ANY ENVIRONMENT, CONSTANTLY MAINTAINS BODY TEMPERATURE AND PROTECTS FROM PRESSURE IN GREATER DEPTHS.
NOTHING CAN STOP OUR PROGRESS!
23

SR3 TO ABUSSOS 2... WE'VE REACHED THE MACHINERY... IT'S NOT FLOODED...
...QUALITY OF AIR IS GOOD... NO TOXIC FUMES...
NORMAL ATMOSPHERIC PRESSURE...NO TRACE OF RADIOACTIVITY... EVERYTHING IS OKAY, RON, YOU CAN JOIN US.
GOOD, WE'RE COMING!
HELP ME!
?!
28

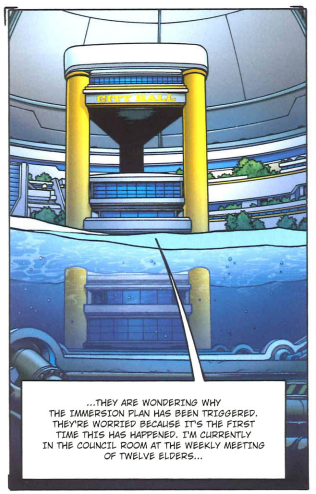
HELP! OVER HERE!
WHERE ARE YOU? I CAN HEAR YOUR VOICE, BUT I CAN'T LOCATE YOU IN THE DARK.
I'M HERE.
YOU'VE ARRIVED JUST IN TIME, RON. WE NEED YOUR HELP! WE HAVE A SURVIVOR DOWN HERE!
ARE YOU HURT?
NO, BUT I'M STUCK BEHIND THE RUBBLE.
WE'LL GET YOU OUT FROM THERE! WHAT HAPPENED DOWN HERE? HOW DID YOU MANAGE TO SURVIVE?
I DON'T REALLY KNOW... I DIDN'T UNDERSTAND WHAT WAS GOING ON... I HEARD A TERRIBLE NOISE... THEN A HUGE EXPLOSION... AND THE CEILING SUDDENLY COLLAPSED, JUST WHEN I WAS IN THE ELEVATOR... IT HAPPENED SHORTLY AFTER THE COMMANDOS LEFT.
WHAT COMMANDOS?!
THE TERRORISTS. THEY CAME IN HOVER-CRAFTS AND THEY MANAGED TO TO ENTER THE GOLDEN CITY PORT BY PRETENDING TO BE MEMBERS OF THE CONTINENTAL POLICE.*
HOW MANY TERRORISTS?
AROUND FORTY, ORDERED BY SOME SEAN. PLAYING ON THE ELEMENT OF SURPRISE, THEY CLEARED THE PLACE IN FEW MINUTES...
HELLO, SEAN? WE'VE NEUTRALIZED THE COPS AND WE'RE PROCEEDING WITH THE COMPLETE EVACUATION OF THE SITE! ALL FIRE DOORS ARE CLOSED! THE PORT AND AIRPORT ARE NOW COMPLETELY ISOLATED FROM THE REST OF THE CITY. NO ONE CAN COME IN HERE...
OK, UNDERSTOOD!
29

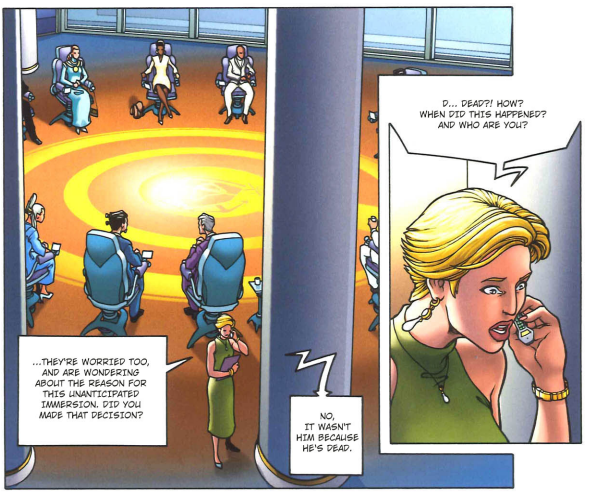
* LIRE TOME 7.

GOOD! AND NOW WE MOVE ON TO COMPLETE IMMERSION!
YOU... YOU'RE JOKING?!
NOT AT ALL! I'VE NEVER BEEN MORE SERIOUS! I KNOW THIS CITY HAS BEEN DESIGNED TO FULLY IMMERSE IN CASE OF DANGER: NUCLEAR WAR, ATMOSPHERIC POLLUTION OR OTHER DEADLY SITUATION! IT CAN DIVE LIKE A GIANT SUBMARINE. AND WE CAN TAKE A LITTLE RIDE INTO THE ABYSS!
WHAT ARE YOU WAITING FOR? MOVE IT! ENGAGE THE IMMERSION SYSTEM!
THAT'S IMPOSSIBLE. YOU NEED TO ENTER A SECRET CODE THAT CHANGES EVERY MONTH AND ONLY TWO PEOPLE KNOW IT.
WHICH PEOPLE? ANSWER! WHO KNOWS THE CODE? TALK OR I'LL SHOOT!
I DO.
AND ME.
OK, I'LL START WITH YOU! YOU HAVE THREE SECONDS TO GIVE ME THE CODE! I'M ALL EARS... ONE... TWO...
NEVER! I WON'T BETRAY MY POSITION AND THE CONFIDENCE OF MY FELLOW CITIZENS!
THREE!
HHHAAA
30


I SERIOUSLY DOUBT THAT YOUR PAL BANKS IS MORE TALKATIVE FROM THIS ASSHOLE OF A MAYOR! LET'S SEE IF I CAN PERSUADE HIM TO TALK. OR WILL HE ALSO TAKE THE SECRET TO THE GRAVE!
I'M COUNTING ON YOU TO CONVINCE HIM! TELL HIM TO GIVE ME THE FUCKING CODE, OR ELSE HE'LL HAVE YOUR DEATH ON HIS CONSCIENCE!
NO, WAIT! I'LL DO IT! I'LL GIVE YOU THE CODE!
31

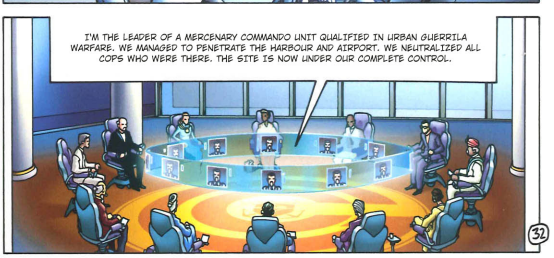
HELLO, MR. MAYOR, THIS IS KIMBERLY. THE TOWN HALL STANDARD IS SATURATED! PEOPLE DON'T STOP CALLING, THEY WANT TO KNOW WHAT'S HAPPENING...

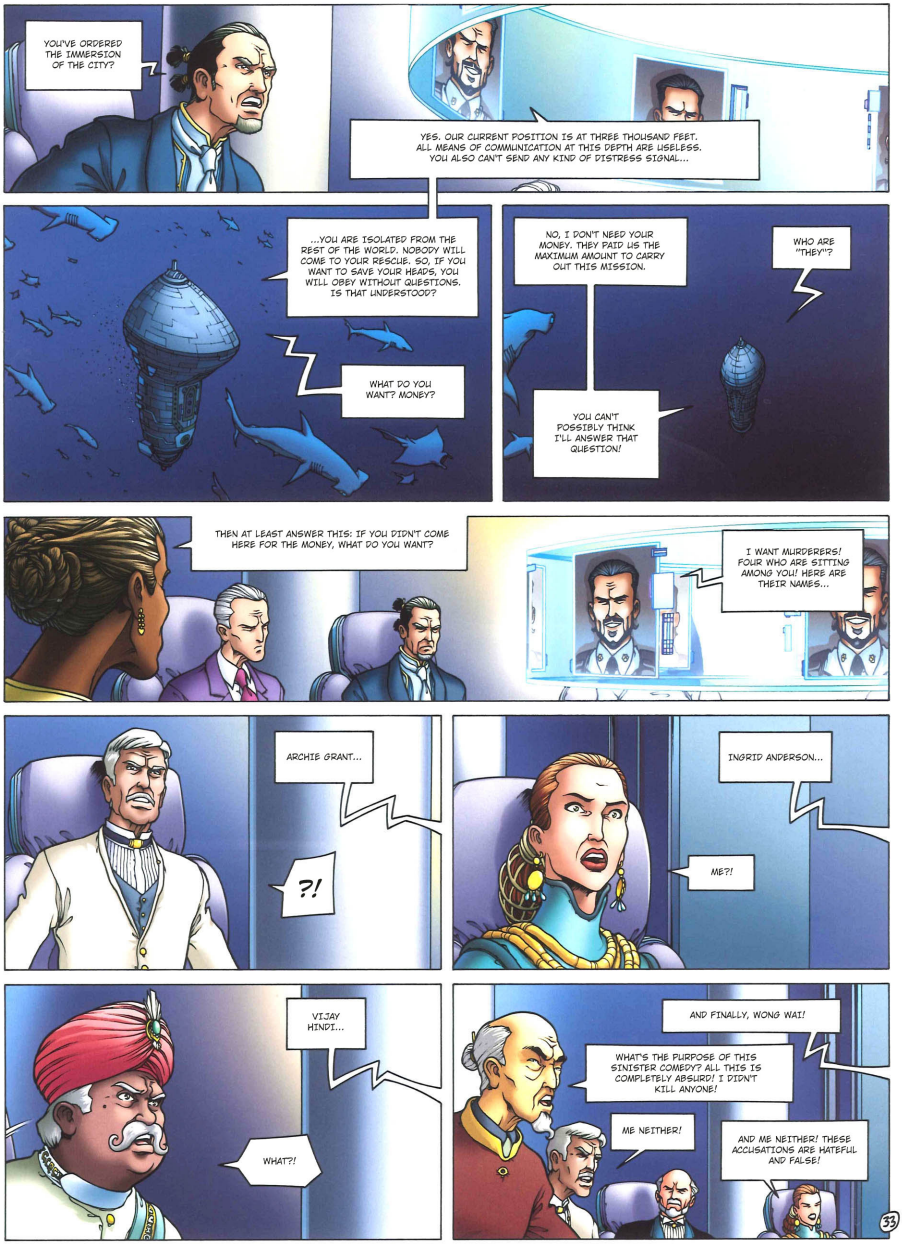

...THEY ARE WONDERING WHY THE IMMERSION PLAN HAS BEEN TRIGGERED. THEY'RE WORRIED BECAUSE IT'S THE FIRST TIME THIS HAS HAPPENED. I'M CURRENTLY IN THE COUNCIL ROOM AT THE WEEKLY MEETING OF TWELVE ELDERS...

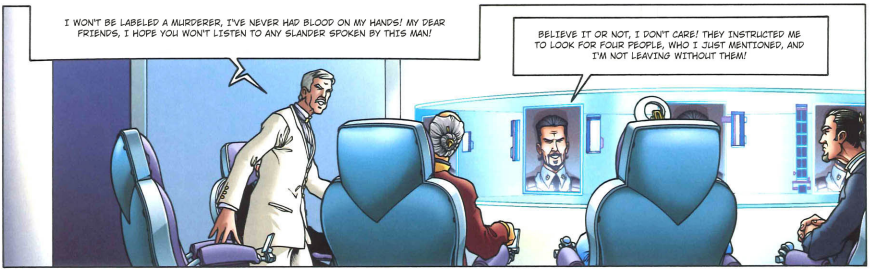

...THEY'RE WORRIED TOO, AND ARE WONDERING ABOUT THE REASON FOR THIS UNANTICIPATED IMMERSION. DID YOU MADE THAT DECISION?
NO, IT WASN'T HIM BECAUSE HE'S DEAD.
D... DEAD?! HOW? WHEN DID THIS HAPPENED? AND WHO ARE YOU?

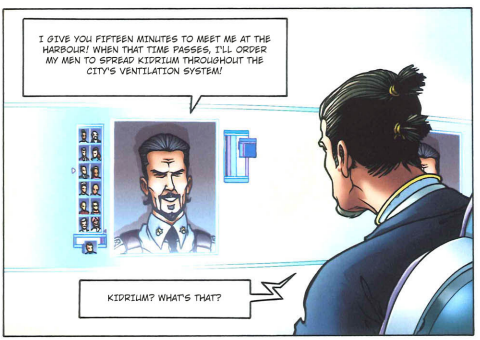
DON'T ASK QUESTIONS AND TELL THE TWELVE ELDERS I WANT TO TALK!

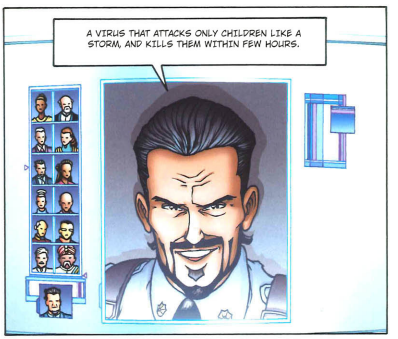
I'LL USE THE CITY INTRANET NETWORK TO SPEAK WITH THEM. ALL RESIDENTS OF GOLDEN CITY CAN FOLLOW ON OUR CONVERSATION.

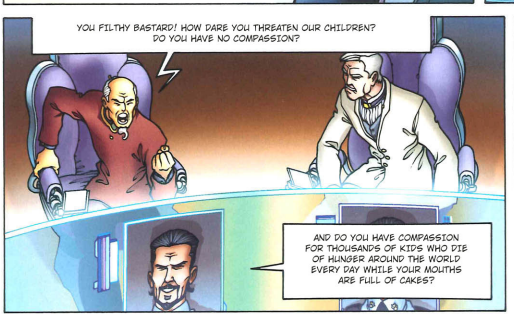

I'M THE LEADER OF A MERCENARY COMMANDO UNIT QUALIFIED IN URBAN GUERRILA WARFARE. WE MANAGED TO PENETRATE THE HARBOUR AND AIRPORT. WE NEUTRALIZED ALL COPS WHO WERE THERE. THE SITE IS NOW UNDER OUR COMPLETE CONTROL.
32

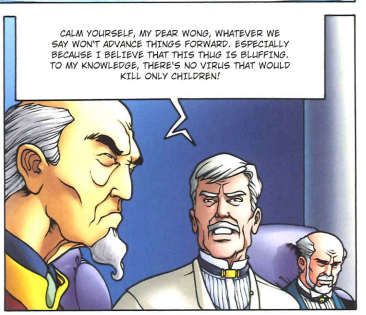

YOU'VE ORDERED THE IMMERSION OF THE CITY?
YES. OUR CURRENT POSITION IS AT THREE THOUSAND FEET. ALL MEANS OF COMMUNICATION AT THIS DEPTH ARE USELESS. YOU ALSO CAN'T SEND ANY KIND OF DISTRESS SIGNAL...
...YOU ARE ISOLATED FROM THE REST OF THE WORLD. NOBODY WILL COME TO YOUR RESCUE. SO, IF YOU WANT TO SAVE YOUR HEADS, YOU WILL OBEY WITHOUT QUESTIONS. IS THAT UNDERSTOOD?
WHAT DO YOU WANT? MONEY?
NO. I DON'T NEED YOUR MONEY. THEY PAID US THE MAXIMUM AMOUNT TO CARRY OUT THIS MISSION.
WHO ARE "THEY"?
YOU CAN'T POSSIBLY THINK I'LL ANSWER THAT QUESTION!
THEN AT LEAST ANSWER THIS: IF YOU DIDN'T COME HERE FOR THE MONEY, WHAT DO YOU WANT?
I WANT MURDERERS! FOUR WHO ARE SITTING AMONG YOU! HERE ARE THEIR NAMES...
ARCHIE GRANT...
?!
INGRID ANDERSON...
ME?!
VIJAY HINDI...
WHAT?!
AND FINALLY, WONG WAI!
WHAT'S THE PURPOSE OF THIS SINISTER COMEDY? ALL THIS IS COMPLETELY ABSURD! I DIDN'T KILL ANYONE!
ME NEITHER!
AND ME NEITHER! THESE ACCUSATIONS ARE HATEFUL AND FALSE!
33

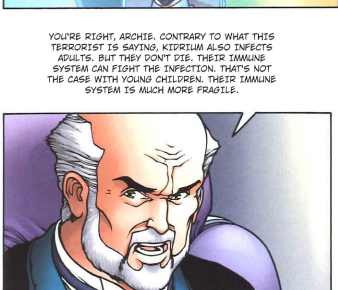

I WON'T BE LABELED A MURDERER, I'VE NEVER HAD BLOOD ON MY HANDS! MY DEAR FRIENDS, I HOPE YOU WON'T LISTEN TO ANY SLANDER SPOKEN BY THIS MAN!
BELIEVE IT OR NOT, I DON'T CARE! THEY INSTRUCTED ME TO LOOK FOR FOUR PEOPLE, WHO I JUST MENTIONED, AND I'M NOT LEAVING WITHOUT THEM!


I GIVE YOU FIFTEEN MINUTES TO MEET ME AT THE HARBOUR! WHEN THAT TIME PASSES, I'LL ORDER MY MEN TO SPREAD KIDRIUM THROUGHOUT THE CITY'S VENTILATION SYSTEM!
KIDRIUM? WHAT'S THAT?

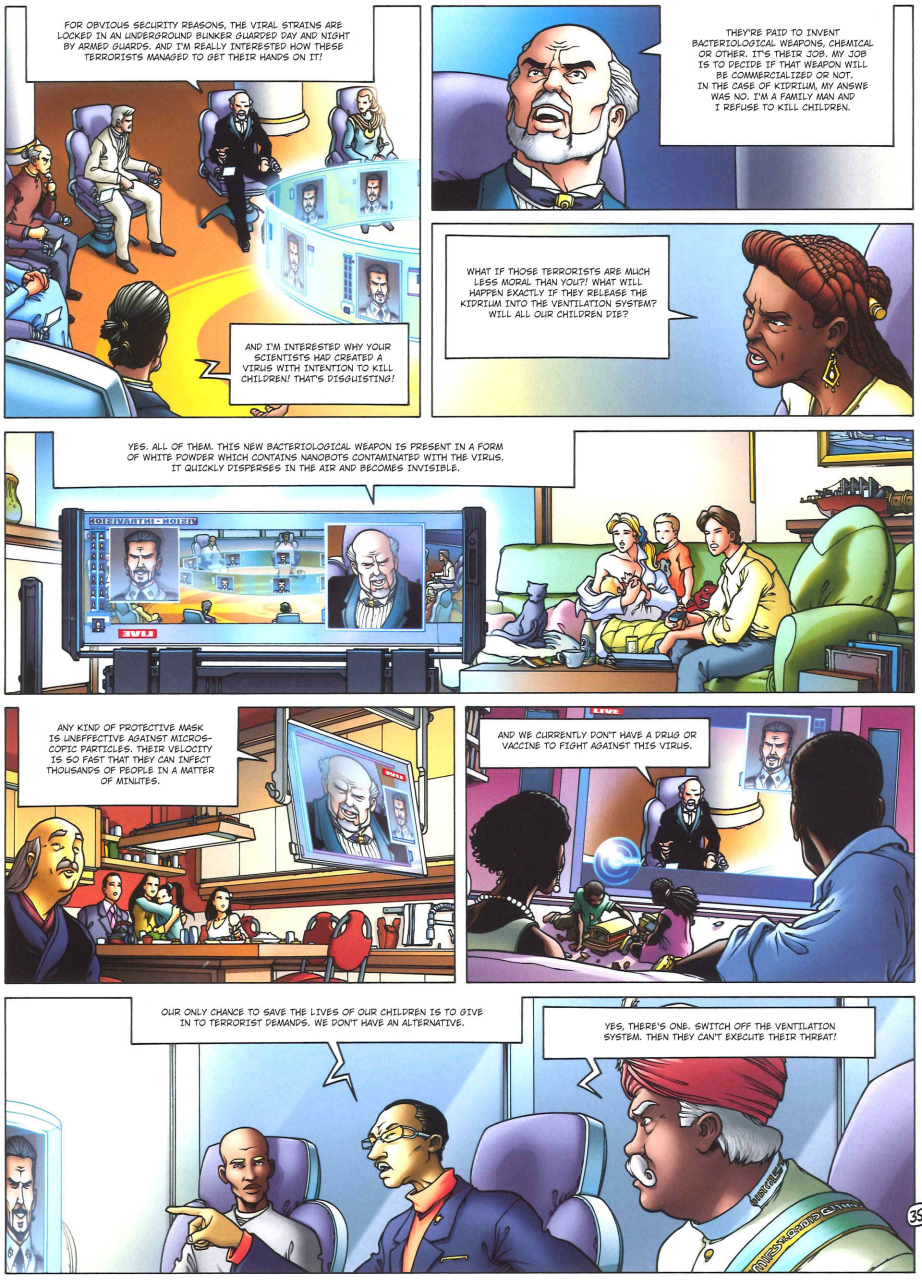

A VIRUS THAT ATTACKS ONLY CHILDREN LIKE A STORM, AND KILLS THEM WITHIN FEW HOURS.


YOU FILTHY BASTARD! HOW DARE YOU THREATEN OUR CHILDREN? DO YOU HAVE NO COMPASSION?
AND DO YOU HAVE COMPASSION FOR THOUSANDS OF KIDS WHO DIE OF HUNGER AROUND THE WORLD EVERY DAY WHILE YOUR MOUTHS ARE FULL OF CAKES?

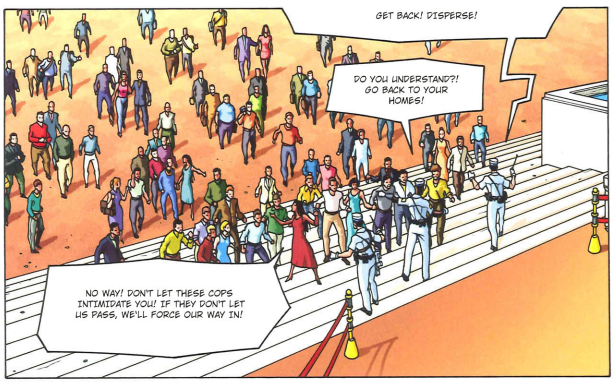

CALM YOURSELF, MY DEAR WONG, WHATEVER WE SAY WON'T ADVANCE THINGS FORWARD. ESPECIALLY BECAUSE I BELIEVE THAT THIS THUG IS BLUFFING. TO MY KNOWLEDGE, THERE'S NO VIRUS THAT WOULD KILL ONLY CHILDREN!


YOU'RE RIGHT, ARCHIE. CONTRARY TO WHAT THIS TERRORIST IS SAYING, KIDRIUM ALSO INFECTS ADULTS. BUT THEY DON'T DIE. THEIR IMMUNE SYSTEM CAN FIGHT THE INFECTION. THAT'S NOT THE CASE WITH YOUNG CHILDREN. THEIR IMMUNE SYSTEM IS MUCH MORE FRAGILE.

ARE YOU SURE, JOHN?
YES, AND WITH A GOOD REASON. KIDRIUM IS A BACTERIOLOGICAL WEAPON ONLY RECENTLY DEVELOPED BY A TEAM OF RESEARCHERS IN ONE OF MY WEAPONS PLANT IN UTMOST SECRECY.
34

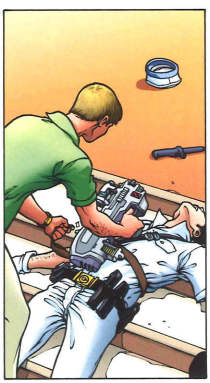

FOR OBVIOUS SECURITY REASONS, THE VIRAL STRAINS ARE LOCKED IN AN UNDERGROUND BUNKER GUARDED DAY AND NIGHT BY ARMED GUARDS. AND I'M REALLY INTERESTED HOW THESE TERRORISTS MANAGED TO GET THEIR HANDS ON IT!
AND I'M INTERESTED WHY YOUR SCIENTISTS HAD CREATED A VIRUS WITH INTENTION TO KILL CHILDREN! THAT'S DISGUISTING!
THEY'RE PAID TO INVENT BACTERIOLOGICAL WEAPONS, CHEMICAL OR OTHER. IT'S THEIR JOB. MY JOB IS TO DECIDE IF THAT WEAPON WILL BE COMMERCIALIZED OR NOT. IN THE CASE OF KIDRIUM, MY ANSWE WAS NO. I'M A FAMILY MAN AND I REFUSE TO KILL CHILDREN.
WHAT IF THOSE TERRORISTS ARE MUCH LESS MORAL THAN YOU?! WHAT WILL HAPPEN EXACTLY IF THEY RELEASE THE KIDRIUM INTO THE VENTILATION SYSTEM? WILL ALL OUR CHILDREN DIE?
YES. ALL OF THEM. THIS NEW BACTERIOLOGICAL WEAPON IS PRESENT IN A FORM OF WHITE POWDER WHICH CONTAINS NANOBOTS CONTAMINATED WITH THE VIRUS. IT QUICKLY DISPERSES IN THE AIR AND BECOMES INVISIBLE.
ANY KIND OF PROTECTIVE MASK IS UNEFFECTIVE AGAINST MICROSCOPIC PARTICLES. THEIR VELOCITY IS SO FAST THAT THEY CAN INFECT THOUSANDS OF PEOPLE IN A MATTER OF MINUTES.
AND WE CURRENTLY DON'T HAVE A DRUG OR VACCINE TO FIGHT AGAINST THIS VIRUS.
OUR ONLY CHANCE TO SAVE THE LIVES OF OUR CHILDREN IS TO GIVE IN TO TERRORIST DEMANDS. WE DON'T HAVE AN ALTERNATIVE.
YES, THERE'S ONE. SWITCH OFF THE VENTILATION SYSTEM. THEN THEY CAN'T EXECUTE THEIR THREAT!
39

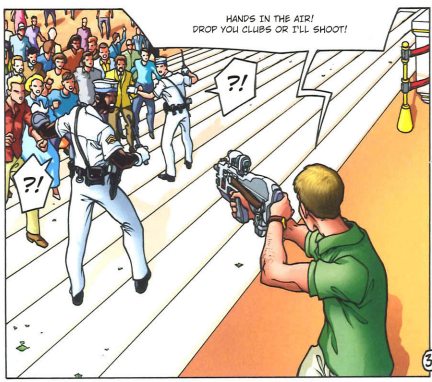
IMPOSSIBLE! THE VENTILATION SYSTEM IS EXTREMELY COMPLEX. IT DOESN'T ONLY CONTINUOUSLY RENEW AND FILTER THE AMBIENT AIR TO KEEP IT PURE AND BREATHABLE...
...IT ALSO CONTRIBUTED TO THE PRESSURIZATION OF THE CITY WHEN IT'S IMMERSED. SWITCHING IT OFF IS OUT OF THE QUESTION. IT WOULD BE CATASTROPHIC!
LET US IN!
WE WANT TO TALK WITH THE TWELVE ELDERS!
I'LL SAY AGAIN: THAT'S IMPOSSIBLE! THEY'RE AT THE COUNCIL MEETING! THEY CAN'T BE DISTURBED!

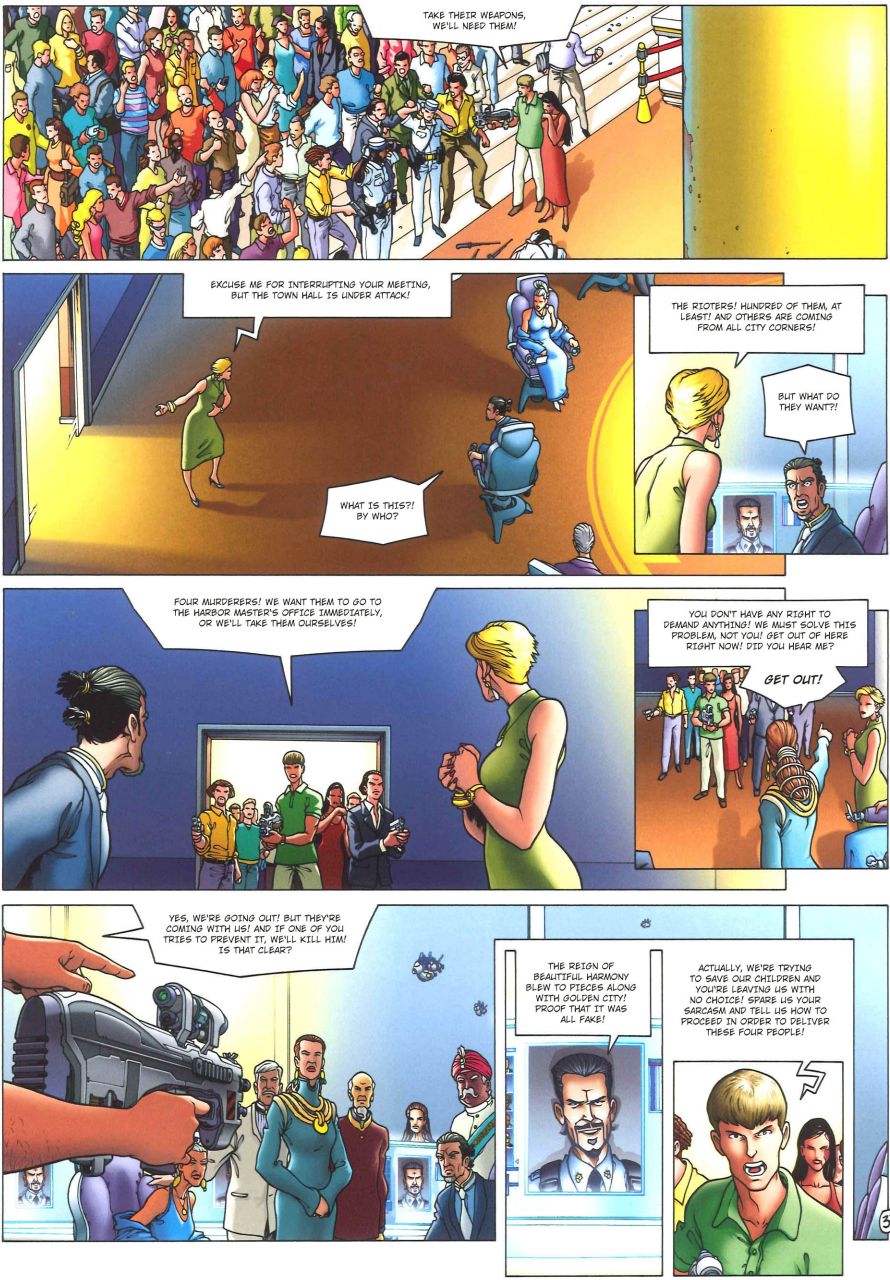

GET BACK! DISPERSE!
DO YOU UNDERSTAND?! GO BACK TO YOUR HOMES!
NO WAY! DON'T LET THESE COPS INTIMIDATE YOU! IF THEY DON'T LET US PASS, WE'LL FORCE OUR WAY IN!

ARH!

PIECE OF SHIT! THAT'S MY WIFE!

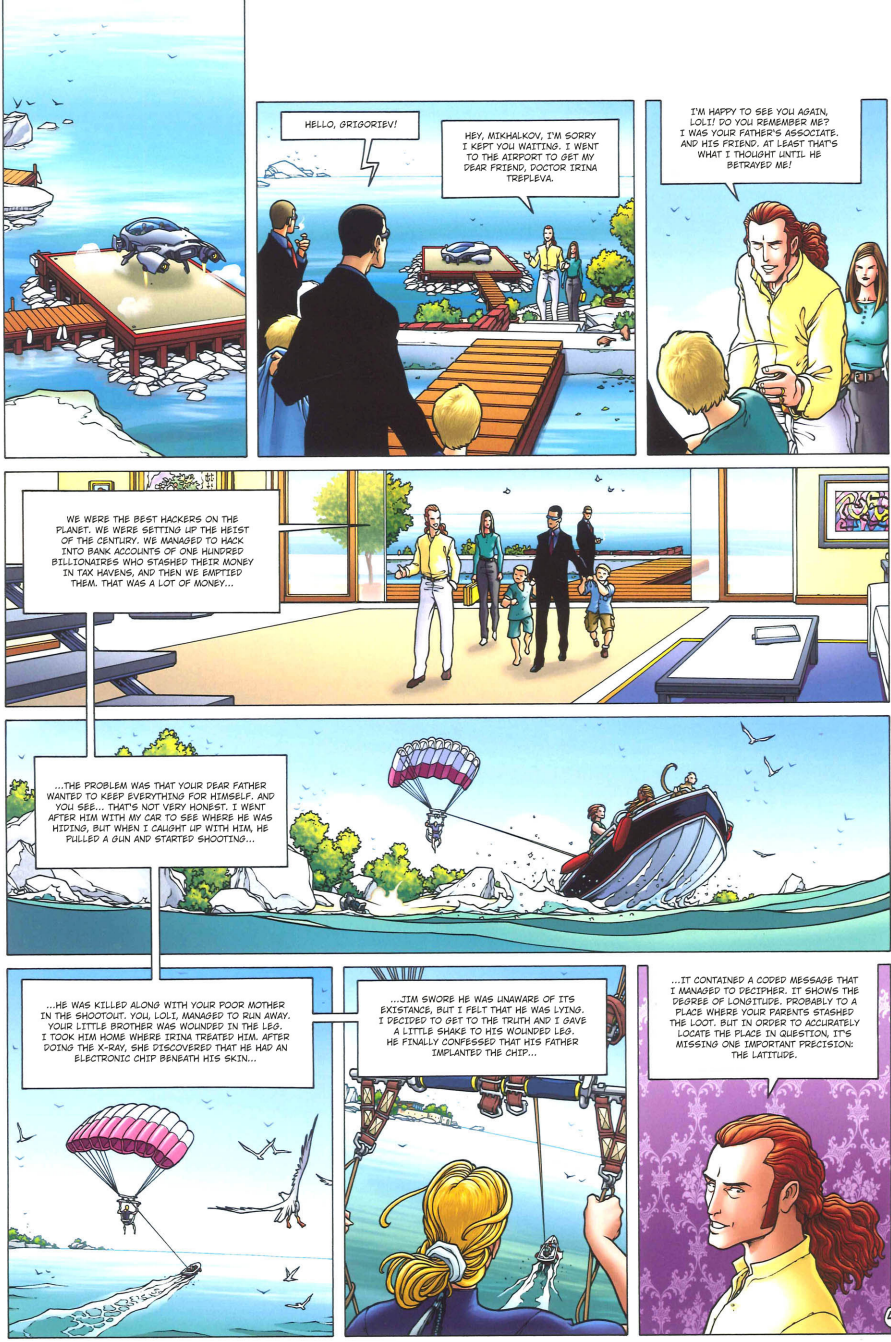


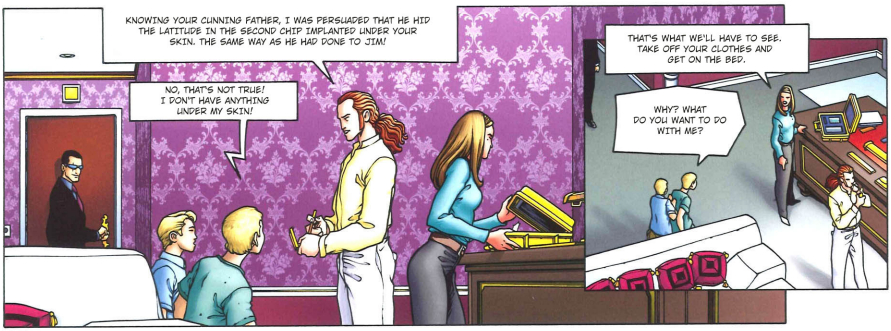

HANDS IN THE AIR! DROP YOU CLUBS OR I'LL SHOOT!
?!
?!
36

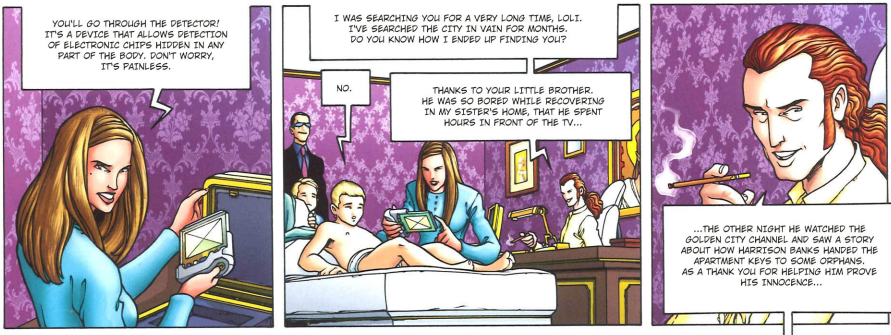

TAKE THEIR WEAPONS, WE'LL NEED THEM!
EXCUSE ME FOR INTERRUPTING YOUR MEETING, BUT THE TOWN HALL IS UNDER ATTACK!
WHAT IS THIS?! BY WHO?
THE RIOTERS! HUNDRED OF THEM, AT LEAST! AND OTHERS ARE COMING FROM ALL CITY CORNERS!
BUT WHAT DO THEY WANT?!
FOUR MURDERERS! WE WANT THEM TO GO TO THE HARBOR MASTER'S OFFICE IMMEDIATELY, OR WE'LL TAKE THEM OURSELVES!
YOU DON'T HAVE ANY RIGHT TO DEMAND ANYTHING! WE MUST SOLVE THIS PROBLEM, NOT YOU! GET OUT OF HERE RIGHT NOW! DID YOU HEAR ME?
GET OUT!
YES, WE'RE GOING OUT! BUT THEY'RE COMING WITH US! AND IF ONE OF YOU TRIES TO PREVENT IT, WE'LL KILL HIM! IS THAT CLEAR?
THE REIGN OF BEAUTIFUL HARMONY BLEW TO PIECES ALONG WITH GOLDEN CITY! PROOF THAT IT WAS ALL FAKE!
ACTUALLY, WE'RE TRYING TO SAVE OUR CHILDREN AND YOU'RE LEAVING US WITH NO CHOICE! SPARE US YOUR SARCASM AND TELL US HOW TO PROCEED IN ORDER TO DELIVER THESE FOUR PEOPLE!

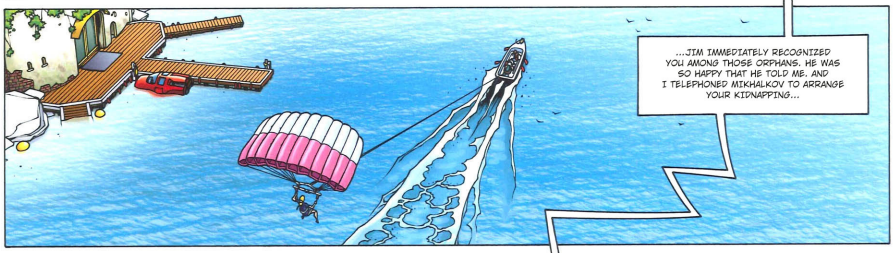
DESCEND TO LEVEL 0 WHERE THERE'S AN ACCESS TO THE PORT. MY MEN WILL BE WAITING AT THE ELEVATOR DOOR. IF YOU PLAY IT SMART, EVERYTHING WILL PLAY OUT WELL AND THEY'LL LET YOU LEAVE...
...BUT IF YOU DECIDE TO PLAY HERO AND USE YOUR WEAPONS, THEY'LL ATTACK! AND I WON'T HESITATE TO RELEASE KIDRIUM INTO THE VENTILATION! UNDERSTOOD?
NOW GET BACK IN THE ELEVATOR AND RETURN UP!
CLOSE THE FIRE DOOR!
OK!
NOW THAT YOU'VE GOT YOUR SATISFACTION, WHAT WILL YOU DO NOW?
HOW?
LEAVE.
IN A SUBMARINE.
"TO COVER THEIR ESCAPE, AND TO BE SURE THAT THEY WILL REACH THE SUBMARINE THAT THEY SECURED IN GOLDEN CITY A FEW MINUTES AGO, THE TERRORISTS TOOK SEVERAL HOSTAGES WITH THEM..."
"...HARRISON BANKS TRIED TO STOP THEM, BUT SEAN KNOCKED HIM OUT WITH THE BUTT OF THE GUN..."
38

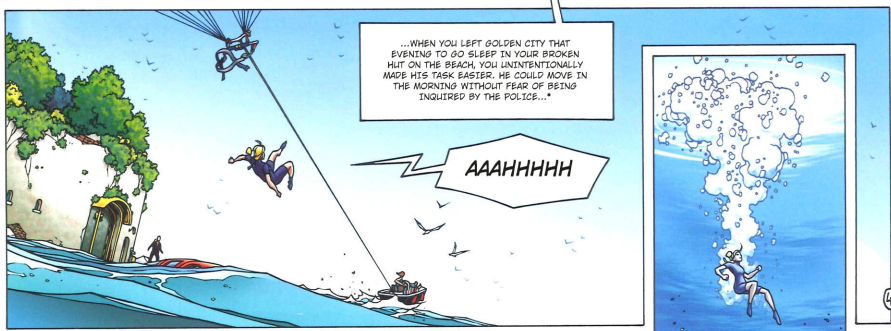
"I WAS AMONG THE HOSTAGES, BUT WHEN I WENT TO BOARD THE SUBMARINE, SEAN TURNED AND SAID TO ME..."
NO, YOU'RE NOT COMING WITH US. SOMEONE HAS TO STAY HERE TO CLOSE THE DOOR LOCK SINCE IT CAN'T BE CLOSED FROM THE OUTSIDE. AND IF IT REMAINS OPEN, WATER WILL RUSH INTO THE MACHINERY, CAUSE DAMAGE AND PREVENT THE CITY FROM RESURFACING.
"...I CLOSED THE HATCH AND THE SUBMARINE WAS GONE. TAKING AWAY MY FRIEND SOLO AND MY NIECE KUMIKO. I LIVED WITH THEM FOR SO LONG. THIS WAS THE FIRST TIME THAT WE WERE SEPARATED. IT MADE ME SO SAD I CRIED IN THE ELEVATOR ON MY WAY BACK..."
"...AND JUST AS I WAS RETURNING TO LEVEL O, THERE WAS A HUGE EXPLOSION AND THE CEILING COLLAPSED. I FOUND MYSELF BURIED IN THE RUBBLE. I WAS VERY LUCKY I DIDN'T GET HURT..."
BUT I'D NEVER GET OUT WITHOUT YOU! I ALMOST LOST ALL HOPE, I THOUGHT I WAS SCREWED, THAT NO ONE COULD HELP ME... AND THEN I HEARD NOISE AND I CALLED FOR HELP...
AND WE HEARD YOU, FORTUNATELY!
THANK YOU FOR SAVING ME!
NO PROBLEM, KID! WHAT'S YOUR NAME?
APPLE.
YOU MUST BE EXHAUSTED. YOU HAD NOTHING TO DRINK OR EAT FOR SEVERAL DAYS!
OH, YEAH, I ATE SOME FRUIT. I FOUND IT IN THE RUBBLE.
IT FELL FROM THE CEILING BECAUSE ACCORDING TO THE PLANS, WAREHOUSE OF VEGETABLES AND FRUITS IS ON THE UPPER LEVEL, RIGHT ABOVE US!
ESCORT APPLE BACK ON ABUSSOS 2 WHERE HE CAN EAT AND REST. WE'LL CONTINUE WITH THE SEARCH. YOU CAN JOIN US LATER.
OK!
39


HELLO, GRIGORIEV!
HEY, MIKHALKOV, I'M SORRY I KEPT YOU WAITING. I WENT TO THE AIRPORT TO GET MY DEAR FRIEND, DOCTOR IRINA TREPLEVA.
I'M HAPPY TO SEE YOU AGAIN, LOLI! DO YOU REMEMBER ME? I WAS YOUR FATHER'S ASSOCIATE, AND HIS FRIEND. AT LEAST THAT'S WHAT I THOUGHT UNTIL HE BETRAYED ME!
WE WERE THE BEST HACKERS ON THE PLANET. WE WERE SETTING UP THE HEIST OF THE CENTURY. WE MANAGED TO HACK INTO BANK ACCOUNTS OF ONE HUNDRED BILLIONAIRES WHO STASHED THEIR MONEY IN TAX HAVENS, AND THEN WE EMPTIED THEM. THAT WAS A LOT OF MONEY...
...THE PROBLEM WAS THAT YOUR DEAR FATHER WANTED TO KEEP EVERYTHING FOR HIMSELF. AND YOU SEE... THAT'S NOT VERY HONEST. I WENT AFTER HIM WITH MY CAR TO SEE WHERE HE WAS HIDING, BUT WHEN I CAUGHT UP WITH HIM, HE PULLED A GUN AND STARTED SHOOTING...
...HE WAS KILLED ALONG WITH YOUR POOR MOTHER IN THE SHOOTOUT. YOU, LOLI, MANAGED TO RUN AWAY. YOUR LITTLE BROTHER WAS WOUNDED IN THE LEG. I TOOK HIM HOME WHERE IRINA TREATED HIM. AFTER DOING THE X-RAY, SHE DISCOVERED THAT HE HAD AN ELECTRONIC CHIP BENEATH HIS SKIN...
...JIM SWORE HE WAS UNAWARE OF ITS EXISTANCE, BUT I FELT THAT HE WAS LYING. I DECIDED TO GET TO THE TRUTH AND I GAVE A LITTLE SHAKE TO HIS WOUNDED LEG. HE FINALLY CONFESSED THAT HIS FATHER IMPLANTED THE CHIP...
...IT CONTAINED A CODED MESSAGE THAT I MANAGED TO DECIPHER. IT SHOWS THE DEGREE OF LONGITUDE. PROBABLY TO A PLACE WHERE YOUR PARENTS STASHED THE LOOT. BUT IN ORDER TO ACCURATELY LOCATE THE PLACE IN QUESTION, IT'S MISSING ONE IMPORTANT PRECISION: THE LATITUDE.
40

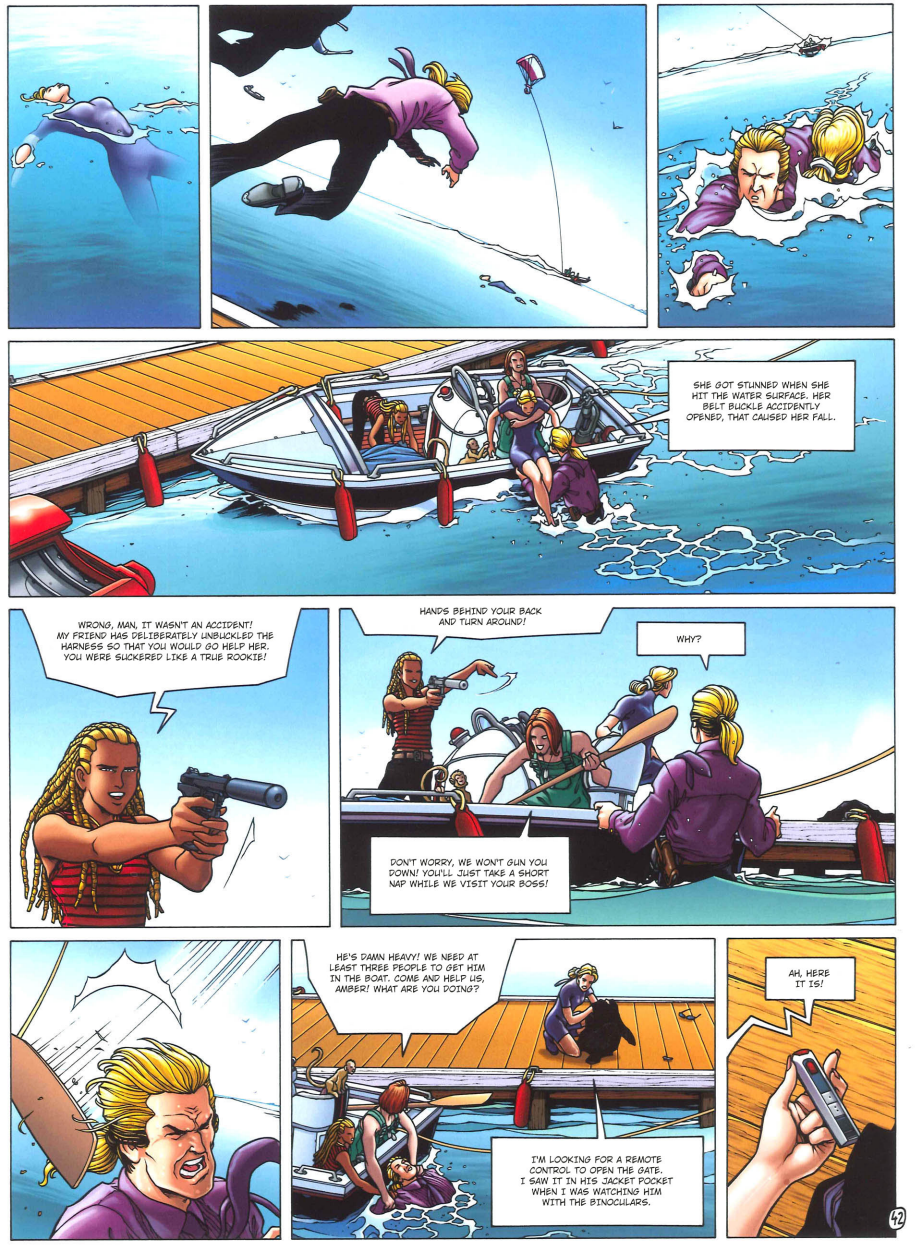

KNOWING YOUR CUNNING FATHER, I WAS PERSUADED THAT HE HID THE LATITUDE IN THE SECOND CHIP IMPLANTED UNDER YOUR SKIN. THE SAME WAY AS HE HAD DONE TO JIM!
NO. THAT'S NOT TRUE! I DON'T HAVE ANYTHING UNDER MY SKIN!
THAT'S WHAT WE'LL HAVE TO SEE. TAKE OFF YOUR CLOTHES AND GET ON THE BED.
WHY? WHAT DO YOU WANT TO DO WITH ME?


YOU'LL GO THROUGH THE DETECTOR! IT'S A DEVICE THAT ALLOWS DETECTION OF ELECTRONIC CHIPS HIDDEN IN ANY PART OF THE BODY. DON'T WORRY, IT'S PAINLESS.
I WAS SEARCHING YOU FOR A VERY LONG TIME, LOLI. I'VE SEARCHED THE CITY IN VAIN FOR MONTHS. DO YOU KNOW HOW I ENDED UP FINDING YOU?
NO.
THANKS TO YOUR LITTLE BROTHER. HE WAS SO BORED WHILE RECOVERING IN MY SISTER'S HOME, THAT HE SPENT HOURS IN FRONT OF THE TV...
...THE OTHER NIGHT HE WATCHED THE GOLDEN CITY CHANNEL AND SAW A STORY ABOUT HOW HARRISON BANKS HANDED THE APARTMENT KEYS TO SOME ORPHANS. AS A THANK YOU FOR HELPING HIM PROVE HIS INNOCENCE...


...JIM IMMEDIATELY RECOGNIZED YOU AMONG THOSE ORPHANS. HE WAS SO HAPPY THAT HE TOLD ME. AND I TELEPHONED MIKHALKOV TO ARRANGE YOUR KIDNAPPING...

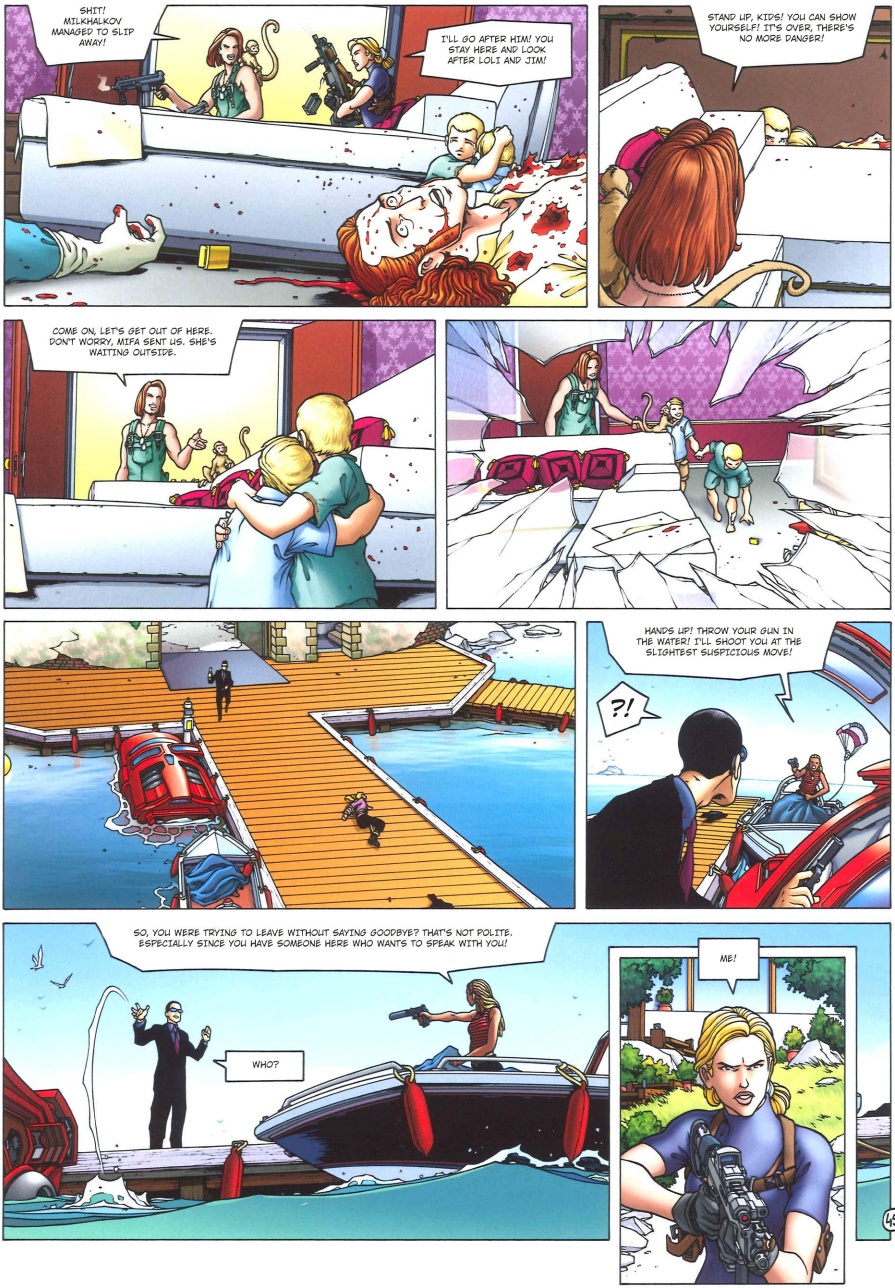

...WHEN YOU LEFT GOLDEN CITY THAT EVENING TO GO SLEEP IN YOUR BROKEN HUT ON THE BEACH, YOU UNINTENTIONALLY MADE HIS TASK EASIER. HE COULD MOVE IN THE MORNING WITHOUT FEAR OF BEING INQUIRED BY THE POLICE...*
AAAHHHHH
41

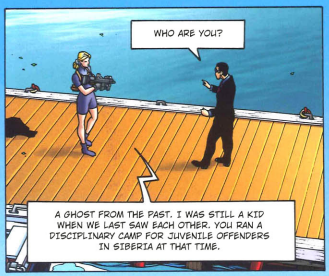
* SEE VOLUME 6.

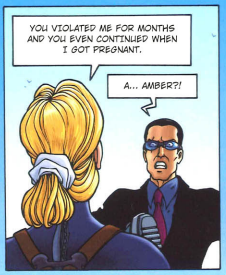

SHE GOT STUNNED WHEN SHE HIT THE WATER SURFACE. HER BELT BUCKLE ACCIDENTLY OPENED, THAT CAUSED HER FALL.
WRONG, MAN, IT WASN'T AN ACCIDENT! MY FRIEND HAS DELIBERATELY UNBUCKLED THE HARNESS SO THAT YOU WOULD GO HELP HER. YOU WERE SUCKERED LIKE A TRUE ROOKIE!
HANDS BEHIND YOUR BACK AND TURN AROUND!
WHY?
DON'T WORRY, WE WON'T GUN YOU DOWN! YOU'LL JUST TAKE A SHORT NAP WHILE WE VISIT YOUR BOSS!
HE'S DAMN HEAVY! WE NEED AT LEAST THREE PEOPLE TO GET HIM IN THE BOAT. COME AND HELP US, AMBER! WHAT ARE YOU DOING?
I'M LOOKING FOR A REMOTE CONTROL TO OPEN THE GATE. I SAW IT IN HIS JACKET POCKET WHEN I WAS WATCHING HIM WITH THE BINOCULARS.
AH, HERE IT IS!
42

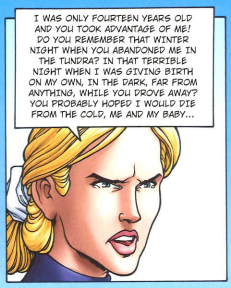
I FOUND IT! HERE IT IS.
ARE YOU SURE THAT IT'S AN ELECTRONIC CHIP?
YES, NO DOUBT ABOUT IT. IT'S JUST ABOVE THE ANKLE. I'LL CUT THE SKIN TO EXTRACT IT.
LET'S GO!
I'M COMING WITH YOU!
NO! YOU STAY HERE AND KEEP AN EYE ON THE GUARD! TIE HIM UP, THERE WAS A ROPE IN THE BOAT.
WHERE DID THIS MONKEY COME FROM?!
HEY! GIVE ME BACK MY BOOK!
FILTHY BEAST! I'LL BRING YOU DOWN REAL FAST, YOU'LL SEE!
43

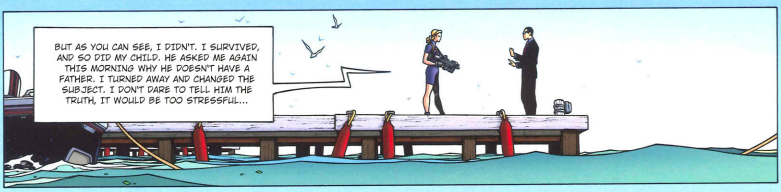
I HAVE IT!
PUT IT IN THE BOX WITH THE FIRST ONE.
NOW THAT I HAVE BOTH CHIPS, I DON'T NEED THE KIDS ANYMORE. I DON'T WANT TO LEAVE ANY WITNESSES BEHIND US. IT'S SAFER THAT WAY. TAKE THEM OUT AND MAKE SURE THAT THEY NEVER FIND THEIR BODIES.
OK!
STAND UP! WE'RE GOING FOR A LITTLE WALK BY THE SEA!
?!
?!
?!
STAY BEHIND THE SOFA, KIDS!
44

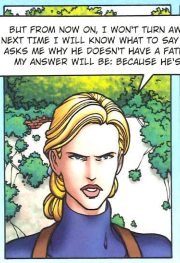

SHIT! MILKHALKOV MANAGED TO SLIP AWAY!
I'LL GO AFTER HIM! YOU STAY HERE AND LOOK AFTER LOLI AND JIM!
STAND UP, KIDS! YOU CAN SHOW YOURSELF! IT'S OVER, THERE'S NO MORE DANGER!
COME ON, LET'S GET OUT OF HERE. DON'T WORRY, MIFA SENT US. SHE'S WAITING OUTSIDE.
HANDS UP! THROW YOUR GUN IN THE WATER! I'LL SHOOT YOU AT THE SLIGHTEST SUSPICIOUS MOVE!
?!
SO, YOU WERE TRYING TO LEAVE WITHOUT SAYING GOODBYE? THAT'S NOT POLITE. ESPECIALLY SINCE YOU HAVE SOMEONE HERE WHO WANTS TO SPEAK WITH YOU!
WHO?
ME!
45

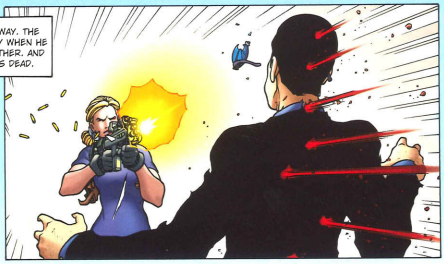

WHO ARE YOU?
A GHOST FROM THE PAST. I WAS STILL A KID WHEN WE LAST SAW EACH OTHER. YOU RAN A DISCIPLINARY CAMP FOR JUVENILE OFFENDERS IN SIBERIA AT THAT TIME.

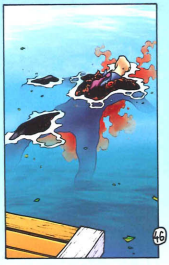


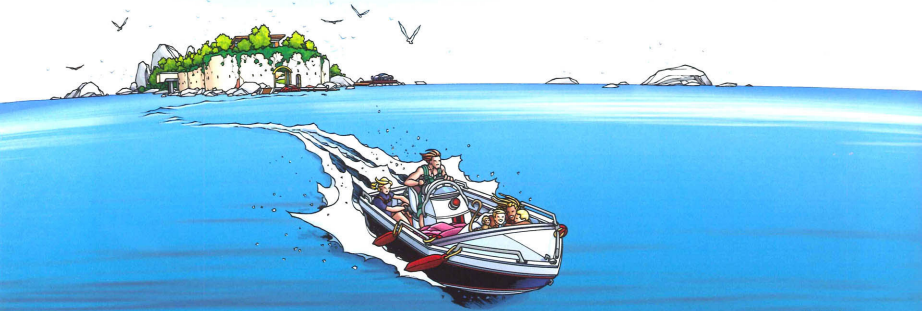

I WAS ONLY FOURTEEN YEARS OLD AND YOU TOOK ADVANTAGE OF ME! DO YOU REMEMBER THAT WINTER NIGHT WHEN YOU ABANDONED ME IN THE TUNDRA? IN THAT TERRIBLE NIGHT WHEN I WAS GIVING BIRTH ON MY OWN, IN THE DARK, FAR FROM ANYTHING, WHILE YOU DROVE AWAY? YOU PROBABLY HOPED I WOULD DIE FROM THE COLD, ME AND MY BABY...


BUT AS YOU CAN SEE, I DIDN'T. I SURVIVED, AND SO DID MY CHILD. HE ASKED ME AGAIN THIS MORNING WHY HE DOESN'T HAVE A FATHER. I TURNED AWAY AND CHANGED THE SUBJECT. I DON'T DARE TO TELL HIM THE TRUTH, IT WOULD BE TOO STRESSFUL...

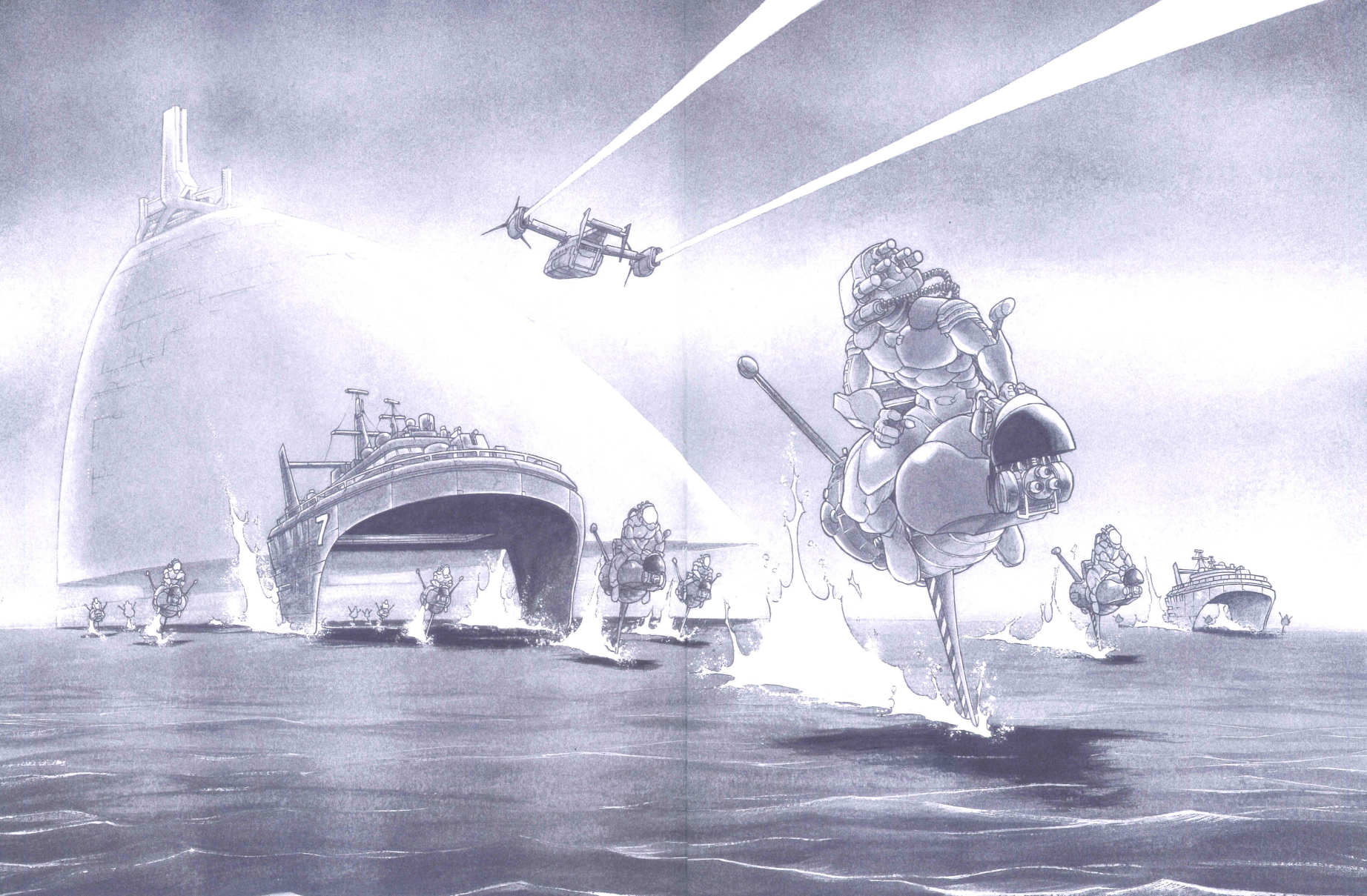

BUT FROM NOW ON, I WON'T TURN AWAY. THE NEXT TIME I WILL KNOW WHAT TO SAY WHEN HE ASKS ME WHY HE DOESN'T HAVE A FATHER, AND MY ANSWER WILL BE: BECAUSE HE'S DEAD.







PECQUEUR & MALFIN
SCHELLE



Golden City

Lilo has been kidnapped. Golden City scientific police managed to identify one of the kidnappers: Piotr Mikhalkov, a criminal with a major sheet at the Interpol. While Mifa starts her pursuit, a terrorist commandos invade Golden City by surprise and force Harrison Banks to start an immediate immersion of the city...